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Constitutional Union Party National Committee  
1860-1869

# JOHN BELL'S RECORD.

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ROOMS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OF "THE CONSTITUTIONAL UNION PARTY,"

357 D Street, Washington, July 31, 1869.

A full exposition of Mr. BELL's course on the Slavery question, from the commencement of the Abolition-petition agitation in 1833 down to the termination of his Congressional career in 1859, has been prepared by a distinguished gentleman of Tennessee, and recently published at Nashville, by the Union Committee of that State.

This document the National Executive Committee has republished, and now presents to the people of the United States. It will be found to contain an authentic expression, from his own speeches and votes, of Mr. BELL's opinions on the Slavery question in all its aspects, and will be sufficient, of itself, to enable every speaker and writer who proposes to take an active part in the Presidential canvass, to silence any man who may charge Mr. BELL with ever having enunciated a principle or advocated a doctrine in regard to Slavery, which should render him unworthy of the confidence and support of his fellow-citizens, in any section of our country, for the highest office in their gift.

By order of the Committee:

ALEXANDER R. BOTELEK, *Chairman.*

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JOHN BELL'S RECORD can be procured by application to the National Executive Committee at Washington, D. C. Price per hundred, \$2.50.

W. H. MOORE, *Printer, Washington, D. C.*

## TO THE PUBLIC.

In the outset of the political canvass for the Presidency just commenced, it is thought important by the undersigned, who are the Central Union Committee of Tennessee, that a fair presentation should be made of the political opinions of Mr. Bell, bearing upon the most important issues now before the country. With this view the Editor of the "National Union" has carefully collated and compiled from his public speeches, acts and writings, such extracts as might most fully exhibit him in his character of statesman and politician. With his private life (though in all respects unblemished) the public has not so much to do.

In his public life, as thus exhibited, we think he has shown firmness, forbearance, moderation, foresight, far-reaching thought, and in a high degree the spirit of conciliation and compromise. He has ever shown himself a son of the Union, a Representative of the Nation, of comprehensive mind and of catholic spirit. See what he has done: hear what he has said. By his acts he is ready to be judged.

EDWIN H. EWING,  
NEILL S. BROWN,  
ALLEN A. HALL,  
JOHN LELLYETT,  
P. W. MAXEY,  
HORACE H. HARRISON

*Committee.*

NASHVILLE, TENN., July, 1860.

## MR. BELL.

Mr. Bell entered the public service, as a Representative in Congress, at the age of thirty-one years. It was in 1827, towards the close of the Presidential term of John Quincy Adams, and shortly preceding the election of Gen. Jackson to the Presidency. During the marked and eventful administration of the latter, many great and exciting questions arose and were decided, for good or evil. All the strong passions of our nature were roused and brought into action by the greatest talent and address on both sides, and the very fabric of the government was shaken and convulsed to its centre.

Though acting, throughout this exciting period, with a party, with the principles of which he in the main agreed, and to which, so far as *principle* was concerned, he was *ever faithful*, yet Mr. Bell was at no time so blindly attached to the one party or opposed to the other, as to be insensible to the motives which probably actuated both. More intent upon watching and noting the peculiar tendencies of our system of government—the dangers which most beset it—the points most exposed to attack, and those to be particularly guarded—more intent upon the solution of these problems, than zealous in the success of every party movement, he, at times, incurred the censure of some of his party friends for what appeared to them indifference to the interests of "the party."

The truth is, that the qualities of Mr. Bell's mind, and the views which, at a very early period of his public life, he formed of the nature and tendencies of our government, and of the duties of American statesmen, utterly disqualified him for ever becoming the blind follower of any party leader, however great and distinguished, or a successful party leader himself, if the condition of such leadership were a ready compliance on his part with all the dictates of mere party expediency.

What these characteristic qualities of Mr. Bell's mind are—what his views of the tendencies and dangers pertaining to our system of government and of the duties of American statesmen—and what the principles which have governed him throughout the whole of his long public life, can be made very clearly to appear by reference to a few passages in his political record:

MR. BELL IN 1829.

*His Opinions as to the safest mode of construing the Constitution—the Principle of Compromise.*

The following passage occurs in a speech delivered by Mr. Bell in the House of Representatives, on the 10th of February, 1829, on a bill for the preservation and repair of the Cumberland road:

"While I am upon the subject of this diversity of opinion which exists as to the safest mode of construing the Constitution, I hope it will not be considered improper or presumptuous in me to make a remark or two in regard to the two great parties which divide this country upon all questions of this kind. They had their origin as far back as the formation of the Federal compact. Their foundations were laid in the difference of sentiment which prevailed at that time, as to the wisdom of the provisions of that instrument. They are, in short, the fruit of that discord of opinions and feelings, without a compromise of which at the time, we should have had no Constitution at all. One opinion was, that sufficient power was not conferred upon the Federal Government to assure the quiet, happiness, and prosperity of the country; while the opinion of others was, that the power actually conceded would prove too strong for the preservation of liberty. The most zealous and active of the partizans on both sides never abandoned their creeds; both parties became sufficiently powerful to propagate their opinions; and as one or the other predominated in the administration of the Government, a tincture of the favorable notions of each was infused into its measures. Both have sought, by construction, to make the Constitution what they wished it to be in fact: the one by enlarging its powers beyond its letter and spirit, the other by narrowing them down to the standard of their wishes. Although it will be seen that I know and feel what party has had the ascendancy for several years past, and where the great danger is, yet it may be said that both these great parties are in some degree hostile, not to liberty, not to their country, but to the Constitution as it is written; to that instrument which we are bound by the most sacred obligations to support; to that instrument to which, for one, I am disposed to cling, with or without such modifications as may be effected by amendment. Both the great parties to which I have alluded, seem to me to have abandoned the principle of compromise. I would adhere to it as the only principle by which the States were able to agree upon any compact, and without an acquiescence in which, we are not destined long to enjoy the blessings of the one adopted. *He, sir, who shall renounce the extremes of both these great parties*, as dangerous to order and union; he, who, by his talents, experience and weight of character shall succeed in placing himself at the head of a great constitutional party, and shall become the advocate of the administration of the Government upon the principle of compromise, as it was understood to have operated in the formation of the Constitution, will deserve the highest gratitude of his country." [See Congressional Debates, vol. 5, page 349.]

It cannot but be regarded as a most extraordinary coincidence, that more than thirty years after the utterance of these opinions, "a great Constitutional party" should rise up, which, "renouncing the extremes" of both the other great parties in the country, "as dangerous to order and union," should be led by its high estimate of Mr. Bell's "talents, experience, and weight of character," to select him to lead them in a contest for "the administration of the Government upon the principle of compromise, as it was understood to have operated in the formation of the Constitution!"

MR. BELL IN 1832.

*His Speech on the Tariff, June 8, 1832—A Plea for the Union—Duty of a Representative.*

With the dangers which threatened the Union in 1832, in consequence of the intense discontent which prevailed in the southern States, and particularly in South Carolina, at the working of the protective tariff, many of our readers are acquainted. To this discontent and its threatened consequences, Mr. Clay adverted in his opening speech on the subject of the tariff, in the Senate, during the session of that year. In allusion to menaces of disunion which had been heard from South Carolina, he entreated "the patriotic people" of that State "to pause, solemnly pause! and contemplate the frightful precipice which lay before them." "To advance, was to rush on certain and inevitable disgrace and destruction." The danger to the Union, however, did not lie, he thought, on the side of persistence in the American system, but in that of its abandonment! Could it be expected that two-thirds, if not three-fourths of the people of the United



States, would consent to the destruction of a policy believed to be indispensably necessary to their prosperity? Let New England, the West, and the Middle States, together with the mammoth States of New York and Pennsylvania, become firmly persuaded that their industry was paralyzed, and their prosperity blighted, by the enforcement of the British colonial system, under the delusive name of free trade—let them feel that they were the victims of a mistaken policy, and despair of any favorable change, and “*then*, indeed, might we tremble for a continuance of the Union.”

“Here,” in the language of an eminent statesman, now deceased, “was an appalling picture presented: dissolution of the Union on either hand, and one or the other of the alternatives obliged to be taken. If persisted in, the opponents to the protective system at the South were to make the dissolution: if abandoned, its friends at the North were to do it!”

With this brief reference to the condition of the country at the time, we shall the better appreciate the course of Mr. Bell, as a representative in Congress, at that perilous crisis:

“This debate,” said Mr. Bell, “it seems to me, was not commenced in the most fortunate spirit, nor has it been conducted altogether in the manner which the nature and intrinsic delicacy and difficulty of the subject demanded. A disposition has been manifested, and sentiments avowed by some gentlemen, equally unexpected and abhorrent to my feelings. It has been openly attempted to prejudice this question by holding it up as a contest between free labor and slave labor; between laboring States and those whose citizens, it is alleged, do not labor. It is openly and vauntingly proclaimed, by one gentleman, to the complaining sections and interests, that, if they shall not be content to abide by what he is pleased to call the established policy of the country, “they may take the consequences!” Sir, I am no alarmist, but when I reflect upon all I see and hear connected with this subject, when I look to the growing distractions of the country, I feel myself justified in designating the sum of what I shall say upon this question, as *a plea for the Union!* Upon such a subject—upon an occasion so interesting—I shall not consider myself as the representative of any particular section or interest; I shall not consider myself either as a tariff or anti-tariff man. I claim to be considered and to be heard as a representative of the whole country, most anxiously concerned for its permanent prosperity, its stability and glory. I claim to be heard as the advocate of higher interests than those which are the immediate subject of consideration. It is no longer a question whether the farmer shall get seventy-five cents or one dollar and twenty-five cents a bushel for his wheat; whether the wool grower shall receive forty or seventy-five cents a pound for his wool; whether the planter shall get eight or twelve cents a pound for his cotton; or whether the manufacturer shall make twelve and a half or twenty per cent. upon his capital. The interests of wool and of woolens, of cotton, of iron, of sugar, and of the whole range of domestic products, sink into insignificance in comparison with those which now force themselves upon our attention, and claim our guardian care and protection. The interests of domestic peace, of free Government, of liberty itself, are involved in this question.”

#### STATE OF THE UNION IN 1832.

“What then, Mr. Chairman, is the state of the Union? In a time of profound peace \* \* \* in the midst of the greatest abundance of all the necessities and even comforts of life, that God in his providence ever decreed to be the rewards of virtue and industry” “discontents, jealousies, and rancorous sectional hates have arisen and are encouraged. Fostered by these unhappy feelings, disaffection to the Government itself makes a slow but steady progress in the hearts of thousands of honest and patriotic citizens. A want of confidence in the mutual justice and forbearance of brethren of the same political family manifests itself. Confidence in our system, consequently, in every quarter, has diminished and is diminishing. Men’s minds are set to work in new and unwonted channels, and upon new theories of Government, for a country of such a diversity of pursuits and interests; upon theories thought to be exploded, or rendered useless, by the practical operation of the established government, until lately. The value of the Union itself, its date, and the consequences of its disruption, begin to be tolerated and canvassed in private discourse—nay, in public debate in this Hall, when, but as yesterday in the period of our existence as an independent people, to breathe such discourse would have been thought little less than downright blasphemy.”

*Condition of Parties in 1832—Extreme doctrines of the infallibility of the Supreme Court on the one hand and of Nullification on the other.*

“It is now more than forty years,” continued Mr. Bell, “since the adoption of the Constitution, and has the contest between the original elements of party, as I have described them, ceased? I answer, no! The war between them, acquiring new vigor from

the infusion of selfish, political, and mercenary calculations, on both sides, has, at this moment, reached its highest and most critical juncture. In some sections the whole country is in a state of mental conflagration. In the intensity of the conflict between the extremes, the leaders on the side of the Republican or vanquished party—for vanquished they are—cry out, and *departing from the spirit of the Constitution, proclaim their determination to accept no compromise*; while, on the other side, the victors, the majority—that majority which holds the destiny of this country in their hands, more calm, equally determined, but with less excuse or reason, announce their determination to yield nothing? Yes, sir, in the face of an imploring country, the majority proclaim that rather than one jot or tittle of the powers they exercise, or the advantages they enjoy, shall pass away, they are ready to stand the hazard of the entire overthrow of the whole fabric of our policy and of our glorious Republic. We, too, they proclaim, will make no compromise, and ‘let the minority take the consequences!’ This is the language of those who control the issues of all that is dear to the patriot, and who are able to dictate the pages of the future history of this country. It is not surprising that in a contest which menaces the repose of the country, the leaders, on both sides, should start new and untried theories, for the purpose of effecting their respective objects. Accordingly, we find that on the side of the victors, in order to secure the benefits of their conquest forever, the doctrine of the infallibility of the Supreme Court is avowed as the only means of securing the stability of the Government. On the side of the vanquished or Republican party, the doctrine of nullification has been invented, and is proclaimed as the only infallible mode of effecting the same object. These are the tests to which all questions of power under the Federal Government are proposed to be brought for final decision. But is it not manifest that both these newly invented doctrines are equally hostile to the spirit of the Constitution? Not to the Union, for both parties, I verily believe, are friendly to the Union, but to a *Union upon their own terms*? Is it not manifest that this is a contest between two extremes, equally distant from the true medium point of the Constitution?

*Importance to the country of a Middle or Moderate party.—Moderation and Compromise the only salvation for the Country.*

“Mr. Chairman, in the almost interminable waste of hope which lies before us, there is one bright spot to which the patriot may direct his eye, in some confidence that relief may come. In all the past civil strifes and revolutions which have agitated this country, and sometimes threatened its institutions, there has always been a moderate party of sufficient strength and influence to turn the balance between the extremes, and to impress upon the action of the Government some portion of that spirit of *moderation and compromise which are characteristic of the constitution itself*. This middle or moderate party is never in much esteem with the extremes on either side. It is said to be composed of men who are more disposed to submit to oppression, than to preserve unimpaired the rights of freemen. Still, to this party I choose to cling; and we shall see who will prove the stoutest defenders of the liberties of the country. This party has always found its support in the good sense and moderation of the great body of the people. It has, in fact, owed its existence to the sound practical judgment and good feeling which, I trust, notwithstanding the vices of the time, still constitute the leading traits in the American population. It has been the sound, uncorrupted sentiment of the great body of the American people, which has always, heretofore, stepped in between the combatant leaders, and brought them to terms of compromise. It is this public sentiment which has still caused the Republican party, when in power, to become less rigid in their construction of the Constitution, than when in opposition. It is the same public sentiment which, when the federal party, being in power, have indulged their enlarging propensities too far, either displaced them, or restrained their action within reasonable limits. I trust there yet remains a portion of that pure and unaffected public sentiment to preserve the country from the confusion and discord which now menace it. The contest may become even more violent. What to-day is only a breeze of popular discontent, may to-morrow swell into a very tornado, threatening to overthrow and prostrate in the dust all the sacred edifices dedicated to freedom on this side of the Atlantic. But still my trust is in the solidity of their foundations.”

*The duties of American statesmen.*

“To calm,” said Mr. Bell, “the rising elements of discontent; to assuage the feverish symptoms of the body politic, is the business of every American statesman. An American statesman! Who and what are the duties and attributes of an American statesman at this day? They are, or they ought to account themselves the high-priests of liberty,



administering her rights for the benefit of her disciples in every country; for this favorite people first, and then for all nations. Such is the high and noble calling of an American statesman. What is the first great care of an American statesman? *To preserve our free institutions*. I will not go into an argument to show that the *only effective mode of discharging this great trust is to preserve and cherish the Union*. That is an axiom in American politics, I trust, too firmly established to be overthrown by the theories of any new professors in the science, however distinguished for genius and talents. What is the next great duty of American statesmen? So to administer their offices as to secure comfort and happiness to the greatest possible number of the citizens of this free country. These are the whole law and the prophets for the guidance of our statesmen. These are the sum of all the commandments in the book of our political faith."

*Majorities and Minorities—He counsels mutual concession for the safety of the Union.*

"I maintain that each representative is, by the theory of the Government, a representative of the whole people of the United States; that the principle of a representation by States or districts was adopted for convenience in making the selection of representatives by the people, and for the purpose of securing to the National Legislature that knowledge of the interests, sentiments, and condition of the whole country, which can be only had through a representative chosen by each small section or district. The interests and conditions of each section are entitled to be considered and respected in the legislative enactments, but only in the proportion which they bear to the aggregate interests and sections. It may and often must happen in the career of this Government, without any concert or design, that a majority, either large or small, shall fashion the legislation of the country and administer the Government in reference to their own interests, without a due regard to the interests and condition of sections represented by the minority; but this is an evil which is necessarily incidental to all societies and all governments, great or small. But, sir, when, in this country, a majority of the representatives of the different sections in Congress shall admit the principle, and establish it in practice, that it is their right and privilege to consult the interests and prosperity of the sections and interests which they represent exclusively, from that moment the action of the Government becomes vicious and tyrannical. Congress can no longer be held up as the great council in which the rights and interests of the whole people may be consulted. The Government ceases to fulfil the ends of its creation, and the proscribed interests and sections must be expected to redress their grievances in any manner they are able. There is no example in history of the submission of a minority, under such circumstances, when it had the power of redress. Whether those in the minority shall be able to redress the grievances in any way, always depends upon circumstances. In the present case, I know not whether it is to be regarded as good or evil fortune, that the proscribed interests and sections lie in a compact form, constituting many contiguous States, giving them facilities for redress which no other circumstances could afford. If the present action of the Government is to continue with unabated energy and vigor, it is surely fortunate that the means of redress are convenient and acceptable to the oppressed interests; but if under the smart of temporary injustice the bands which bind the Union shall be precipitately sundered, all earth may well deplore and curse the fatal facilities for so instant and fatal a remedy. I trust there is no settled purpose in any portion of the oppressed sections, to avail themselves of the means of redress which they may have at their disposal; but I conjure those who sway the power of the House, seriously and earnestly to consider the alternative of modifying a system of policy sustained upon the principle I have described, or of beholding, sooner or later, the Union broken up, and this last and noblest sanctuary of freedom polluted and destroyed. I trust I do not offend by lifting up an admonitory voice upon this subject at this alarming juncture of our affairs. I speak in the sincerity and with the fervency which belong to the representatives of a portion of the people of this country, who, so far from having any disposition to countenance disunion, regard such a catastrophe as the last and direst calamity which fate can have in store for their country, short of absolute slavery and oppression. But they cannot close their eyes to the dangers which stare them in the face, and they invoke, through me, their brethren everywhere—of every quarter of the country, of every party and of every pursuit—to *concede something to this greatest common interest, the safety of the Union.*"

In the same speech from which the foregoing extracts are taken, Mr. Bell said, the "immediate and practical question" before Congress and the country was as to "the degree of protection which ought to be given to manufactures, under all the circumstances of the country"—whether the then existing tariff system should be "enforced with rigor, or in spirit of concession and moderation." Believing the system to have been pushed to an extreme, and seeing, as he said, that it had "been the means of bringing the country to the very verge of disunion," he expressed his "strong conviction of the necessity, in



the existing state of the country, of modifying it." It was modified by the celebrated Compromise Tariff Act, which was passed very shortly afterwards. When, however, under the practical workings of this act, the degree of protection afforded by it, fell below "a just and expedient standard," Mr. Bell favored the policy of raising it to that standard.

*Extremes of Party in 1832—Nullification and the Force Bill.*

Three years afterwards, in his celebrated speech at Vauxhall, Nashville, referring to the excesses to which the protective system had been carried—to Nullification which grew out of those excesses, and to the Force Bill which grew out of Nullification, Mr. Bell said:

"I have not yet shown how it happened, that the questions which have arisen within the last ten years came to excite so unusual a degree of heat and violence. Need I attempt this seriously? What! have we so soon forgotten, that while the party to which we belong [the Jackson party:] while it was contending for the mastery, and even for years afterwards, in some of the large States in which the contest was most fierce and doubtful, each party, one in order to gain, and the other to maintain, party ascendancy, and both utterly regardless of all other consequences, contended which should go farthest in the support of both branches of the American system, the tariff and internal improvement? In all history, there is not a more striking and characteristic instance of the absurd and headstrong spirit of party. In regard to the tariff, all men of unprejudiced feelings and judgment must have seen, and did see, from the first, that the result would be either a re-action which might reduce it below a just and expedient standard, or that the Union itself would be severed. The immediate consequences of the extremes into which the supporters of the tariff, in one section of the Union, were driven, in a struggle for political power, was to excite an extreme antagonist action in another section. The leaders in the anti-tariff region sought to counteract the excesses to which they saw the protective policy was likely to be carried by a combination in its favor, between both political parties to the North and East, thought it necessary to proceed to equal or greater extremes in order to protect the interests of the minority to the South. This state of parties gave birth to *Nullification*, by which the projectors of it sought to equalize the action of the Government, by questioning the validity of its regular enactments, and seeking to set them aside upon the authority of a separate State and local construction of the Federal power. Before a sufficient time was allowed for reason to resume her sway, in correcting the excesses into which the spirit of party had hurried both sides, so many political interests, so many personal views and resentments commingled in the strife, that an *extreme* remedial action [the Force Bill] of the Government itself became a *necessary expedient*, in the judgment of moderate and unprejudiced men, though involving in its issues civil war, disunion, and a total overthrow of the Constitution."

MR. BELL IN 1835.

*Extracts from a Speech delivered at Vauxhall, Nashville, on the 23d of May, 1835.*

EXCESSES OF PARTY.

"It will be a circumstance, in my course, to which, as long as I live, I can revert with conscious satisfaction, that I have ever opposed what appeared to me to be the excesses in the party with which I have acted, with all the influence I could employ, and in the only way in which I could do so without injury to its principles. While I have studied to make myself useful, I have never set myself up as a leader of the party, or of a party."

*Moderation and a Spirit of Conciliation indispensably necessary in the Administration of the Government.*

"I have said that there was nothing in the questions which have arisen within the last eight or ten years in this country, necessarily productive of the extremes to which they have been carried. I re-affirm the proposition. Nor is there, from my observation, in the federative feature of our system, or in the extent of territory over which it operates, or even in the institution of slavery itself, as established in some of the States, taken together, or separately considered, which essentially impairs the prospects of harmony, duration, and a prosperous action of our system. If we except the danger to the local society into which slavery is admitted, there is no peculiarity in our condition from which we have anything to fear, *except in connection with the designs of bad men*, who have, or may acquire, an ascendancy in one or the other of the two parties, which must ever have a decided influence upon the action of the Government. Even, then, some of these

peculiarities are useful rather than injurious. They present formidable obstacles to the consolidation of power in any one set of men, or any party, founded upon unworthy or bad motives and principles. AS LONG AS MODERATION AND THE SPIRIT OF CONCILIATION shall preside over the administration of the federal government, any faction which shall seek to divide the Union, either by rousing a sense of injustice and inequality in the action of the government in one section, or by seizing upon the delicate and inflammable question of slavery in the other, can always be shorn of its strength and defeated in its object, without the slightest convulsive sensation in our system."

*The Real Danger to our System of Government.*

"The real danger to our system, as in every other system of free Government, is a *violent party action of the government itself*. A proscribed and disregarded minority, respectable for its numbers, its talents—and even for the virtues of many of its members, for virtue is never the exclusive attribute of any one party—such a minority is always tempted, in resentment for its real or imaginary wrongs, in redress for its violated privileges as American citizens, in being deprived of all actual participation in the government of the country—compelled to obey laws and be the subjects of a policy, prescribed and directed exclusively by their opponents; such a minority, I repeat, is constantly tempted to seize upon every vexed and irritating question, to make common cause with the spirit of fanaticism itself in an effort to right, or at all events, to avenge their injuries. This is the danger of our system."

MR. BELL AND THE SLAVERY QUESTION—1840.

ABOLITION PETITIONS.

The reader will note the difference between rejecting the *prayer* of a petition, and rejecting or refusing to receive the petition itself. When, in 1790, three years after the adoption of the Constitution, the Society of Friends, of Pennsylvania, forwarded a petition to Congress praying its interference with the African slave trade, the *petition* was *received*, although it contained an unconstitutional request—Congress being expressly prohibited by the Constitution, for twenty years to come, from meddling with the slave trade. No question as to the *reception* of this petition was made, although its reference or commitment to a committee, with a view to its being reported upon, was vehemently opposed by some of the Southern members, on the ground that it asked Congress to do that which was unconstitutional. Mr. Madison advocated its *reference*:

"Gentlemen," he said, "*might vote for the commitment [or reference] of the petition without any intention of supporting the prayer of it.*"

On a subsequent day, the debate still *continuing*, Mr. Madison said:

"The debate has taken a serious turn, and it will be owing to this alone, if an alarm is created; for, had the memorial been treated in the usual way, it would have been considered as a matter of course, and a report might have been made so as to have given general satisfaction. \* \* \* \* \* The petition prayed in general terms, for the interference of Congress, so far as they were constitutionally authorized; but even if its prayer was in some degree unconstitutional, it might be committed, as was in the case of Mr. Churchman's petition, one part of which was supposed to apply for an unconstitutional interference by the General Government."

From 1790 down to 1835, when the question of the *reception* of abolition petitions was *first* made in the House of Representatives, all petitions, couched in decorous and respectful terms, were *received* by Congress, whatever their subject matter might be. This fact was stated by the late FELIX GRUNDY, in a speech made by him, in the Senate of the United States, on the 2d of March, 1836, from which the following is an extract:

MR. GRUNDY ON ABOLITION PETITIONS.

"Therefore, if there were no constitutional doubts existing, (as to the right of Congress to refuse to receive the petitions,) he would, as a matter of expediency, vote to receive the petitions, to be followed up with a vote to reject their prayer. But he confessed that the Constitutional right to refuse to receive a petition was very far from being clear. The right of petition existed before the formation of the Constitution. It was well understood by the framers of that instrument; and although it only declares that Congress shall pass no laws to prevent citizens from peaceably assembling and petitioning for a redress of grievances, it never could have entered into their minds, that those to whom the petitions were to be addressed would refuse to receive them. Of what



value is the right of petition, if those to whom petitions are addressed *will not receive them, and act upon them?* The framers of the Constitution remembered that the Parliament of Great Britain had passed laws prohibiting citizens from assembling, consulting, and petitioning for a redress of grievances. They recollected the acts, commonly called the riot acts, and therefore they inserted the provision contained in the Constitution. But it never entered into their minds that petitions, when signed, would not be received by those to whom they were addressed. It was a matter of very little consequence to citizens that they are permitted to assemble and petition for a redress of grievances, if, after they have done so, their petitions are not to be received or considered by those who have the power to act upon the subject-matter of the petition. To his mind these arguments were too strong to be disregarded; and he was unwilling to give the Abolitionists the benefit of them. At present they have no foundation on which to stand. They are giving way to the pressure of the public intelligence in the non-slaveholding States. But if we shall enable them to blend the right of petition with their abolition schemes, they may raise a storm which will shake the very foundation of this Government. From the year 1790 down to the present day, all petitions have been received by this body which were respectful and decorous, whatever the subject-matter of the petition might be; and at every session, the petition of the Society of Friends, clothed in similar language with the present one, has been received. Mr. G. would not depart now from the established usage. He considered the *reception of the petition and the rejection of the prayer as the strongest course against abolition that could be adopted.*"

To the same conclusion with Mr. Grundy—namely, that the petitions ought to be *received and acted upon*, came Mr. Bell, as will be seen by the following extract of a letter written by him to the late Hon. Geo. R. Gilmer, of Georgia, in 1840, and published in a number of the newspapers of the day:

#### MR. BELL IN 1840—ABOLITION PETITIONS.

"When the abolition movement at the North had reached a point of excitement which began to be felt in Congress, I was actively engaged in the canvass between Judge White and Mr. Van Buren. The question was of such a nature as to render it almost impossible, in an assembly composed of so many ardent and impulsive spirits as the Congress of the United States, that it should not become, in some shape or degree, connected with the party conflicts of the day. Some of my most valued and cherished friends thought Mr. Van Buren fairly and justly assailable in the South, on the ground of his vote to instruct the Senators of New York against the admission of Missouri. The favor which his friends and supporters at that time showed to abolition petitions, by voting for their reception, and also for their reference under Pinckney's resolution, appeared to them to afford a proper ground of attack before the people. I remonstrated earnestly with my friends against the policy of such a course, and against any proceeding whatever which might tend to bring about a division of parties, to any extent, upon such a delicate, not to say dangerous issue. \* \* \* \* \*

"At the period to which I refer, (1836,) the opposition to Mr. Van Buren in the South and Southwest, with few exceptions, took the position that the right of petition did not exist in this case. This opinion was maintained upon the ground that Congress had no right to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia; and it was contended that a petition to do an unconstitutional act was not entitled to notice, and ought not to be received. The argument was carried still further. It was strenuously urged that the admission of the power to abolish slavery in the District would be fatal to the South.

"My opinion was, that whether the petitioners had strict right on their side or not, sound policy dictated the reception and reference of their petitions. I believed that any unusual course in regard to them would give undue importance to the movements of the abolitionists, furnish new ground for agitation, and rather increase the existing excitement than allay it."

Under these convictions, Mr. Bell only, of all the southern representatives in Congress, (save Mr. Bouldin, of Virginia,) voted against the second clause of the fifth of

#### THE 'ATHERTON RESOLUTIONS,

which provided, that all petitions "relating in any way or to any extent whatever to slavery as aforesaid, or the abolition thereof, should, on the presentation thereof, without any further action thereon, be laid on the table, without being debated, printed, or referred."

The origin of these Atherton resolutions was as follows: On the night of the 8th of December, 1838—Martin Van Buren being President—there was a meeting in Washington of a few administration members of the House of Representatives from the South and



a few from the North. The meeting was called at the instance of the Hon. R. B. Rhett, of South Carolina, who, since the days of nullification, has had the strongest proclivities towards disunion, and is now an open disunionist, to consider certain resolutions which he had prepared on the subject of slavery. The resolutions were considered and adopted, and as it was deemed expedient that they should be offered by a northern man, Mr. Atherton, of New Hampshire, was selected for that purpose. Accordingly, he presented them to the House three days afterwards, made a speech explanatory of his reasons for offering them, and concluded by calling the previous question, so as to cut off all debate and amendments. Gov. Wise was at that time a Whig representative from Virginia. He denounced the whole proceeding in the most indignant terms on the floor of the House; and on a subsequent occasion, in a public address to a portion of his constituents, he stated that these resolutions were prepared *in secret*, so far as the Whig representatives from the South and North were concerned, and agreed upon by some few or more Van Buren men of the South, with others from the North, without permitting the Whig slave-holding members of the South to know anything of the matter, until it was sprung upon the House, with a call for the previous question. He said these resolutions, thus prepared and brought forward, were "the first of a strict party proceeding." known to our national history.

This was the first organized effort at slavery agitation for strictly party purposes. The concoctors and authors of the proceedings were southern Democrats, who contrived to secure the co-operation of a portion of the northern Democrats of the House. Mr. Rhett, who prepared the resolutions, is a confessed disunionist. Mr. Atherton, who was induced to offer them, voted in 1847 for the Wilmot Proviso. And Mr. Van Buren, of whose administration the parties to the movement were all supporters, became in 1848, the Frescoil candidate for the Presidency, on the Buffalo platform—receiving the support of a majority of the Democracy of New York over Gen. Cass.

The same patriotic considerations which moved Mr. Bell to vote against the clause in the Atherton resolutions, impelled him to vote against the famous

#### TWENTY-FIRST RULE

of the House of Representatives, which was as follows:

"That no petition, memorial, or resolution, or other paper, praying the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, or any State or Territory, or the slave-trade between the States or Territories of the United States, in which it now exists, shall be received by this House, or entertained in any way whatever."

The rule was adopted, in a House where parties were nearly balanced, by 114 yeas to 108 nays—Messrs. Bell and Gentry, of Tennessee, and Anderson, Calhoun, and Underwood, of Kentucky, being the only southern representatives who voted in the negative.

At the next Congress, (the 27th,) the House being Whig, the rule was again adopted.

At the next Congress, (the 28th,) on the 3d of December, 1844, on motion of John Quincy Adams, the rule was *rescinded* by a vote of 108 yeas to 80 nays.

In the House by which the rule was rescinded by this very decided majority, the Democrats had a majority of *two-thirds*!

The grounds upon which the rule was rescinded by this overwhelmingly Democratic House had been very fully discussed by leading Democrats from the free States at the preceding session of the same Congress. Among these was a distinguished Democratic representative from New York, the late SAMUEL BEARDSLEY, who, in a speech delivered on the 5th of January, 1844, said:

"What has the refusal to receive these petitions done, but to create perpetual strife and denunciation? \* \* \* \* \*

The remedy of driving petitioners out of doors is a wrong course; it is affronting to them, and in my view a violation of the Constitution. It never will end agitation either here or elsewhere. I, therefore, would beseech and entreat of the South to change the question. I pray them to consider and respect the right of petition."

The rescinding of the rule was strongly advocated by another distinguished Democrat, the Hon. J. A. WRIGHT, of Indiana, now United States Minister at Berlin, who was at that time a member of the House of Representatives, and who used the following language:

"You now see, since the adoption of this rule in 1840, these miserable fanatics and enthusiasts going through the country, setting up their *notices* and *placards*, large as life, and in all these announcements, they are for lectures to be given on the *right of petition—the right of petition*. Thus we have an issue made wholly different from that of

abolition. And I now ask gentlemen to say whether they insist on this false issue? Will they press the question in this shape? I ask them to change, and to meet the question in some other way—either, as Mr. Grundy says, by rejecting the prayer of the petition, *after the reception*, or by some direct vote putting the matter to rest. For one, I am determined to vote so as to give this question its true appearance. I have a sovereign contempt for these wild, deluded, enthusiastic abolitionists; yet I cannot vote for the rule. *I want to take this weapon out of their hands*, and let them stand forth on their own principles; and if they had not this rule, or question of the right of petition, (connected as it is with their movements,) they would not be worth in a short time a passing notice.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I hope that gentlemen see this question as understood by the people; that it is not regarded as one of abolitionism, but one of petition. And it becomes the duty of this House to change the issue. It is *now* regarded by the great mass of the people of the free States as a blow struck at what they consider as the right of every citizen in this country—the *RIGHT to be heard*."

Upon *these* grounds, thus earnestly urged by the Democratic leaders of the free States, the famous Twenty-First Rule, after a four years' trial, was rescinded by a House of Representatives numbering two Democrats for every Whig! And it was in this way, by *actual results*, and the votes of an overwhelmingly Democratic House, that the course of Mr. Bell on the subject of abolition petitions was most signally vindicated!

#### SLAVERY AGITATION—STRIKING ILLUSTRATION OF MR. BELL'S FORESIGHT.

The letter from Mr. Bell to Gov. Gilmer, above referred to, was written and published just twenty years ago. In it there occur the following passages:

"The deliberate and persevering obstinacy with which the supporters of the Administration [Martin Van Buren's] in the slave States persist in making abolition one of the issues between the two great parties which now divide the country, I consider *wicked and mischievous in the highest degree*. \* \* \* What ought to be the measure of indignation and punishment which should be dealt out to those *hollow and false guardians of southern interests, who will, for the sake of a trifling party advantage*, put every thing to hazard by perpetual agitation? For there is, and always has been, quite as much to be apprehended on this subject from those who agitate the question on *political account, in the South*, as from the abolitionists themselves.

I have been a member of Congress, as you know, from the commencement of the agitation upon the subject. I have witnessed all that has taken place in Congress in relation to it. I saw, and I think I fully understood, the game that was playing by some gentlemen, but I was not inclined to take part in it, because I thought the stakes too high. It was a common impression that the first movements of the abolitionists at the North were not looked upon with any deep regret by a portion of our fellow-citizens of the South. The fanatic spirit was rather provoked than deprecated. The North, without distinction, was freely charged with a feeling of settled hostility to southern interests; and many injurious reflections were cast upon their motives, calculated to give strength to the cause of the fanatics, by uniting with them a more rational and calculating class of the Northern people. The motive to this policy in the South, to whatever extent it was adopted, was, beyond all doubt, to combine the South and Southwest more closely in their political movements and preferences. I then thought the experiment a dangerous one, regarding it in a political view only; for it struck me that, if the ambitious aspirants of the North should take it into their heads to play the same sort of game in retaliation, the South would soon be thrown into a settled minority, and forthwith deprived of political power.

To these views entertained and published by Mr. Bell, twenty years ago, we ask the candid attention of the people of the slave-holding States, as eminently worthy of their grave consideration at the present juncture, and as poring a flood of light upon Mr. Bell's whole course upon the slavery question. He saw the "game" which the Van Buren leaders of the Southern Democracy would play with slavery agitation—a game for party purposes—and foretold what would be the result, if persisted in. He regarded it as a most dangerous and reckless game for the South; for it struck him, "that if the ambitious aspirants at the North should take it into their heads to play the same sort of game in retaliation, the South would be thrown into a settled minority, and forthwith deprived of political power."

The southern Democratic aspirants would, however, persist in the game, until northern aspirants took it into their heads to play the same in retaliation, and the result has been that Fremont came near being elected to the Presidency in 1856, and that Lincoln *may*



possibly be elected in 1860—in which event those “hollow and false guardians of southern interests” who originated the game—who have been industriously playing it ever since, and who have put up their last stakes upon it *now*, have announced their intention to break up the Union if they can!

The people of the South can thus fully understand why Mr. Bell has, through the whole of his long public life, uniformly opposed the making of unnecessary or immaterial issues between the South and the North on the subject of slavery. Does not the present unhappy and alarming state of the Union conclusively prove, that Mr. Bell, in pursuing that course, has shown himself to be a most sagacious and patriotic statesman, and a *true and loyal son of the South*?

### THE SLAVERY QUESTION IN 1850.

In the Senate of the United States on the 3d, 4th, 5th and 6th days of July, 1850, Mr. Bell gave his views on the slavery question in all its varied aspects. His opinions on all the material points involved in the subject will be found in the passages from his speech, which we proceed to give:

#### *Territorial rights of the South.*

“In the opinion of by far the greater number of the most eminent jurists of the United States, the laws of Mexico prohibiting slavery at the [time of] the cession are still in force, and must remain so until they are expressly repealed, either by Congress or the local legislature. This is the opinion of the distinguished Senator from Kentucky [Mr. Clay] himself. Such is the opinion of the scarcely less distinguished Senator from Michigan. [Gen. Cass:] and such is the opinion of the able and eminent statesman, the Senator from Massachusetts, [Mr. Webster,] three leading champions of this bill. I do not forget another Senator from the South, of high rank in his profession, [Mr. Badger,] who is also a supporter of this bill. Thus, sir, slavery, if it goes into New Mexico at all, must force its way there, in despite of all the obstructions of local laws, and of the interdict imposed by this bill on the territorial legislature. Still it is contended that the South is secured in the full benefit of the doctrine held by some of the most distinguished champions of its rights, who maintain that the Constitution, *proprio vigore*, that the flag of the Union protects the citizen in the enjoyment of his rights of property of every description recognized as such, in any of the States, on every sea, and in every territory of the Union. And this doctrine, it is said, is well founded, and if it shall be so declared by the Supreme Court, will authorize the introduction of slavery into New Mexico. The soundness of the general doctrine held upon this point, I think, cannot well be questioned or disproved; and if the question related to a territory situated as Oregon was, when the United States came into possession of it, property in slaves would be entitled to the protection of the laws and Constitution of the United States; but the question is more doubtful and formidable to the interests of the South, where it is raised in reference to New Mexico, where there has been an organized society and government for two centuries, and where slavery was prohibited by the local sovereignty before and at the date of the cession to the United States; and where under that prohibition slavery had ceased to exist. The Constitution in its application to this Territory, is expected not merely to protect property in slaves, as in the case of Oregon, before there was any exercise of sovereignty upon the subject one way or the other, but to supersede the local laws in force prohibiting slavery, when the United States came into possession of it. If the obstructions interposed by these laws were removed, then the principles of the Constitution would be left to their full and fair operation, and the South might look, with some confidence, to the protection of slave property in this territory through the courts of the United States.”

Mr. Bell was in favor of removing these “obstructions,” in order that the “principles of the Constitution” *might* be left “to their full and fair operation,” and that “the South *might* look with some confidence to the protection of slave property in this territory, through the courts of the United States,” as will appear by his vote in favor of the following amendments to the Compromise bill offered by Mr. Davis of Mississippi:

“And that all laws, or parts of laws, usages or customs, pre-existing in the territories acquired by the United States from Mexico, and which in said territories restrict, abridge or obstruct the full enjoyment of any right of person or property of a citizen of the United States, as recognized or guaranteed by the Constitution or laws of the United States, are hereby declared and shall be held as repealed.”

The yeas and nays on the adoption of this proposition to repeal or abolish the Mexican laws prohibitory of slavery, were as follows:



Yeas—Messrs. Atchison, BELL, Berrien, Clemens, Davis of Mississippi, Dawson, Foote, Houston, Hunter, King, Mason, Morton, Pearce, Rusk, Sebastian, Soule and Yulce—18.

Nays—Messrs. Badger, Baldwin, Benton, Bright, Cass, Chase, Clarke, Clay, Cooper, Corwin, Davis of Massachusetts, Dayton, Dodge of Wisconsin, Dodge of Iowa, Felch, Greene, Hamlin, Jones, Miller, Norris, Phelps, Pratt, Shields, Smith, Spruance, Sturgeon, Underwood, Upham, Walker and Whitecomb—30. [See Congressional Globe, vol. 21, part 2—page 1,254.]

Mr. Bell also voted against an amendment offered to the bill by Mr. Baldwin, declaring that "the Mexican laws prohibiting slavery should be and remain in force in said territory until they should be altered or repealed by Congress." [See page 1,146 of same volume.]

He voted also against the following amendment offered by Mr. Seward:

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, otherwise than by conviction for crime, shall ever be allowed in either of said territories of Utah and New Mexico." [See page 1,134, same volume.]

He voted also in favor of an amendment offered by Mr. Berrien. of Georgia, providing against the passage of any territorial law "establishing or prohibiting slavery." [See same volume and page.]

*The cause of freedom wrapped up in the Constitution and the Union—"a Wretch who does not deserve to live."*

"The gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. Chase,] New York, [Mr. Seward,] and New Hampshire, [Mr. Hale,] talk about the cause of freedom. I wish, sir, I had the strength to speak about the cause of freedom. Paradoxical as it may appear, this question is one that concerns the cause of freedom in the South as well as in the North. It is not a question whether you will permit a few slaves of the South to go and toil in California and New Mexico, but it is a question of freedom everywhere. The cause of freedom is wrapped up in the Constitution and the Union. These are the great bulwarks—the Chinese wall of freedom. These once broken down, anarchy and military despotism become our inheritance. This is the stake to some extent at issue now. If we allow faction—fanatical or political—preconceived opinions—prejudice or partiality for particular plans or modes of adjustment to sway our course, we strike a blow at the common liberty. No man can be justified before the country, under such circumstances, in taking the position that he will accede to nothing but what his own judgment prescribes. \* \* \*

"So, sir, if I could dictate the course of Congress in the pending difficulties. I would say, *let the adjustment be made in the real spirit of concession, compromise and conciliation.* Let us have some assurance that the promised harmony shall be permanent. Stay this agitation; allay this burning fever that threatens to consume the system. Terminate this suspense, which is more intolerable than an open rupture. If we of the South have made up our minds to yield nothing; to endure nothing; or if a better spirit actuate us, and we are prepared both to yield something and to endure something, and yet cannot bring our northern brethren to any terms of just and equitable arrangement, and they will continue to vex and harass us, now and forever, let us resolve, and let them suffer us, to manage our own affairs in our own way. I trust it will never come to this issue. Sir, to suppose that there is one member of this body who is not ready to sacrifice, to concede something of his individual sentiments to secure an adjustment of these questions—were he untrammelled by pledges, to which he may owe his position here, and which he may not violate without dishonor—to suppose there is one man here from the North or the South, who, upon a cold and selfish calculation of personal advancement, would insist upon extreme issues, is to suppose him a wretch who does not deserve to live."

#### HUMANITY AND JUSTICE OF THE DIFFUSION AND EXTENSION OF SLAVERY.

"The fanatics and sentimentalists of the North, with all the countenance they receive from the more just and sober-minded opponents of the institution of slavery, would not have been able to conjure up this storm, but for their alliance with other auxiliary and exciting elements of agitation,—sectional jealousies, the interests of party and personal ambition. \* \* \* I am not to be deluded, Mr. President, by the appeals from the North upon the subject of human wrongs and the violation of human rights. I am not to be misled as to the real and true grounds of the anti-slavery-extension policy of the North, by the fine sentiments so often expressed on the subject of freedom and the claims of humanity. I know, sir, that however sincere and conscientious the anti-slavery sentiment of the North may be, neither the cause of freedom nor a sentiment of humanity is the active principle of the non-extension policy of the North. Were it proposed by the South to impose the chains of servitude upon a single human being now

free, there is no man living to whom such a proposition would be more revolting than myself. But, sir, humanity to the slave, not less than justice to the master, recommends the policy of diffusion and extension into any new territory adapted to his condition; and the reasons are too obvious to be misunderstood by the dullest intellect. No, sir, it is not a principle of humanity that dictates the anti-extension policy of New York. It is deeply founded in the ambition of sectional ascendancy; dictated, in part, by the jealousy of southern influence and control, and the recollection of the long line of southern chiefs who have succeeded to the executive mantle. These are the interests and passions which, more than any others, have decided the policy of the North upon this subject."

#### INVOKES THE JUSTICE OF THE NORTH.

"But, however natural and inevitable the existence of such passions and influences, under the circumstances of our system, let me invoke the justice of my northern friends, if not their forbearance, by some consideration for the passions and sensibilities naturally incident to the South, under the prospect of their declining power and influence in the Confederacy. While that protracted domination of the South, which has been so long and so keenly felt at the North, was always more imaginary than real—no southern man having ever attained the Presidency except by the concurrence of oftentimes more than half, and always of a large division of the North; yet, now it cannot be disguised that the period of southern ascendancy—if it ever had any real existence—approaches its end. Political power and ascendancy, in a sectional view, have already passed away from the South forever. And this is so manifest, that a Senator, who spoke in this debate, could not forbear taunting the South with the prospect of their declining fortunes. A great change has taken place in the political vocabulary: 'It is no longer,' he exclaims, 'the South and the North; it is now the North and the South.' The South, Mr. President, needs not to be reminded by the triumphant North of her decayed power; and when the people of the South have, in prospect, the admission of eight or ten additional free States, in rapid succession, without the equivalent of a single slave State, the North should know how to excuse the restlessness of their southern brethren, and feel no surprise that they should be looking about for some new guarantee; some additional protection to their peculiar condition and institutions."

#### HE HOLDS FAST TO THE CONSTITUTION.

"But, sir, as to myself, I shall hold fast to the Constitution until I see that it no longer interposes a barrier to *absolute aggression*; and I trust that some final adjustment of all these distracting questions will yet be devised and adopted upon a basis so just and reasonable as not only to stay the progress of disaffection, but to furnish to the world the highest evidence that no diversity of local institutions, or of sectional interests, or any other cause of occasional dissensions, will ever be so powerful for mischief as to sunder the ties which now bind us together as one people."

#### MR. BELL ON AFRICAN SLAVERY.

"Mr. President, I cannot conclude my remarks without taxing the indulgence of the Senate yet further in saying a few words upon the subject of that institution, against the extension of which to the new territories, some gentlemen manifest so great a horror. It has been denounced in this debate as a great moral and political evil; as a grievous wrong and oppression to the race which are the subjects of it; a blight and curse to the country which tolerates it, and a sin upon the consciences of the masters individually. I am identified with this so much abused institution, by my representative position in this Chamber, in association, in character, and in responsibility to the tribunal of public sentiment. It is, therefore, natural that I should make a brief reply to the accusatory charges of my northern countrymen. \* \* \* \* \*

"For the purposes of my argument, the origin and progress of slavery in the United States may be briefly told. Without pretending to accuracy of detail, it may be stated with sufficient conformity to historical fact, that some century and a half ago, or a little more, a few thousand natives of Africa, in form and mind stamped only with the coarsest rudiments of the Caucasian race; scarcely bearing the impress of the human face divine; savage in their habits, both of war and of peace; ferocious as the wild beasts of their own native haunts, were caught up and transported to these shores, reduced to a state of bondage, and they and their descendants beld in slavery until this day. What do we now behold? These few thousand savages have become a great people; numbering three millions of souls; civilized, christianized; each new generation developing some improved features, mental and physical, and indicating some further approximation to the race of their masters. *Search the annals of all history, and where do you find a fact so striking and wonderful, one so worthy the contemplation of the philosopher, the statesman, the*



*Christian and the philanthropist?* This great fact stands out boldly before the world; and in the impressive language of the Senator from Missouri, (Mr. Benton,) *it stands for an answer; and it must ever stand for an answer. Sir, it can never be successfully answered. Has humanity cause to drop a tear over the record of this great fact? Has Africa any cause to mourn?*

"But there are some other and subordinate facts, fairly deducible from the greater and more prominent one, which may likewise defy contradiction or answer. The rapid multiplication and improved lineaments of this people attest the fact, that the yoke of bondage has pressed but lightly upon them; and that they have shared freely, with their masters, of the fat of the land. Go, I repeat, and search the pages of history, and where will you find a fact comparable to this? The history of the Hebrew bondage presents no parallel—nothing so wonderful. The family of Jacob (the germ of the Hebrew nation) were of a superior race, and civilized. There is one singular analogy, however, besides that of bondage, which may be traced in the history of these two people. While the religious institutions of the one forbade any amalgamation, social or political, with their masters and surrounding nations, nature, by laws more stringent and inexorable, forbids to the other any equality, social or political, with the race which holds them in bondage.

"As to the lawfulness or sinfulness of the institution of slavery—whatever phrenzied or fanatic priests, or more learned and rational divines may preach, whatever they may affirm of Christian precepts or moral and religious duties and responsibilities; whatever interpretation of the law of nature or of Almighty God they may announce; whatever doctrines or theories of the equality of human rights, and of the different races of mankind, diversified as they are by complexion, by physical formation and mental development, infidel philanthropists, or the disciples of a transcendental creed of any kind, may hold or teach; however they may dogmatize upon this hypothesis, and declare it to be a violation of the law of nature, for any one race, with whatever superiority of mental or physical faculties they may be endowed, to subjugate those of an inferior grade, and make them the instrument of improvement and amelioration in their own condition, as well as in that of masters or conquerors, in carrying forward the great work of civilization, until we shall be enlightened by revelation from a higher source than themselves, I must claim the privilege of interpreting the law of nature by what I see revealed in the history of mankind from the earliest period of recorded time, uncontradicted by Divine authority. I must interpret that law according to the prominent facts connected with the subject, as they have stood out in the past, and as they stand out before us at this day. Looking through the eyes of history, I have seen slavery or involuntary servitude, the handmaid of Hindoo, Egyptian Assyrian, Jewish, Greek and Roman civilization. I have seen the institution recognized by the theocratic government of the Jews—the chosen depositaries of the WORD OF LIFE—by democratic Athens and republican Rome. I have seen, upon the overthrow of Roman civilization by the savage hordes of the north, that those new masters of western Europe and their successors, adopted and continued to uphold the same institution, under various modifications, adapted to the changing condition of both slave and master, and still under an advancing civilization, until a comparatively recent period. I see the same institution tolerated and maintained in eastern Europe, at this day. I see the native race of all British India, at this moment, bowing the neck under a system of *quasi* slavery. But above all, I have seen here—on this continent, and in these United States, the original lords of the soil subdued—some of them subdued to slavery, other expelled, driven out, and the remnant still held in subordination; and all this under an interpretation of the law of nature, which holds good at this day among our northern brethren; and I have yet in reserve that great fact to which I have already alluded—three millions of the African race, whose labor is subject to the will of masters, under such circumstances that their condition cannot be changed, though their masters should will it, without destruction alike to the interests and welfare of both master and slave. These are the lights by which I read and interpret the law of nature.

"Now, sir, permit me to say a few words upon the effects of this institution upon the country which tolerates it. To the great fact to which I have more than once alluded, conjoined with the system of equal laws, which our ancestors brought to these shores, perfected and consolidated at the Revolution, and by the adoption of the present form of Union, we are indebted—the world is indebted for that other great phenomenon in the history of the rise and progress of nations; a phenomenon, in all its bearings, not yet fully comprehended by the nations of the Old World, nor even by ourselves; and which, in all future time, will be the study and admiration of the historian and philosopher; I mean not the founding of a republic on these shores, so recently the abode only of savage and nomadic tribes, but its amazing growth and development; its magic-like spring, from small beginnings—rising, as it were, by a single effort, by one elastic bound, into all the attributes of a first-rate power; a great republican empire—able not only to maintain its rights of sovereignty and independence, by land and sea, against a



hostile world, but at the same time, by its example, shaking to their foundations the despotic powers of the earth; a great incorporation of freedom, dispensing its blessings to all mankind. Sir, the fable birth of Minerva, leaping in full panoply from the head of Jove, if a truth, and no fiction, would scarcely be more wonderful, or a greater mystery, without the clue which African slavery furnishes for the solution of it.

"Sir, making all due allowances for American enterprise and the energies of free labor, with all the inspiring advantages of our favorite system of government, *I doubt whether the power and resources of this country would have attained more than half their present extraordinary proportions, but for the so much reviled institution of slavery.* Sir, your rich and varied commerce, external and internal; your navigation; your commercial marine, the nursery of the military; your ample revenues; the public credit; your manufactures; your rich, populous, and splendid cities—all, *all may trace to this institution as their well-spring, their present gigantic proportions;* nourished and built up to their present amazing height and grandeur by the great staples of the South—the products of slave labor.

"Yet, slavery, in every form in which it has existed from the primitive period of organized society—from its earliest and patriarchal form to this time, in every quarter of the globe—and all its results—even the magnificent result of African slavery in the United States, is declared to be against the law of nature. Though contributing in a hundred varied forms and modes, through a period of thousands of years, to the amelioration of the condition of mankind generally; though sometimes abused and perverted, as all human institutions, even those of religion, are still contributing to advance the cause of civilization; though, if you please, having its origin in individual cupidity, still mysteriously working out a general good; yet slavery and all its beneficent results are pronounced to be against the will of God, by those who claim a superior illumination upon the subject. This may be so; but I must say that this conclusion, so confidently announced, is not arrived at in accordance with the Baconian method of reasoning, by which we are taught that from a great many particular and well-established facts in the physical economy, we may safely deduce a general law of physical nature; and so of morals and government. It seems to my weak faculties, that it is rather an arrogant and presumptuous arrangement of the ways of Providence, mysterious as we know them to be, for feeble man to declare, that that which has been permitted to exist and prosper from the beginning, among men and nations, *is contrary to its will.*

"But whoever has studied the history of civilization, the progress of society—of laws and government—must have perceived that certain abstract or theoretic truths, whether in civil or religious policy, have been, and can only with safety to the ultimate ends of all societies and governments, be unfolded by degrees, and adjusted at every step, according to the advance of society from its infancy to a higher civilization and a more enlightened comprehension—such as the equality of natural rights of self-government, and freedom of speech and opinion. These general truths, though they cannot be successfully controverted at this day, yet, as they have been seldom admitted, in their length and breadth, in the practical operations of government, with success, some law-givers have been led to deny that they are founded in reason; and when they have, at any time, been suddenly embraced by the controlling minds among the people, the misfortune has been that they were applied in excess, and without due regard to the actual condition of the people who were to be affected; and hence they have, so far, failed of success in some of the most highly civilized nations of Europe. But it is more to the point to refer to the emancipation of the slaves of St. Domingo—one of the first explosive effects of the sudden recognition of the rights of man by the French people. It would be difficult to demonstrate, at this day, that the cause of humanity, or of human progress has been, in the slightest degree, promoted by the abolition of slavery in that fertile and beautiful island. It is, I believe, now pretty well understood, that British statesmen committed an error in the policy of West Indian emancipation, forced upon them by fanatical reformers. They were driven to adopt a sentiment, instead of a practical truth, as the foundation of a radical change in the social condition of a people, who were not prepared either to appreciate or profit by it. Even the reformation in religion and church government, commenced some three centuries ago, in the opinion of many of the most profound inquiries, has failed of that complete success which ought to have attended it, for the reason that the general truths and principles upon which it was founded were applied in excess. The zealous champions of reform, in throwing aside all ceremonies and observances which affect the senses, and in spiritualizing too much, there is reason to believe, have stayed the progress of substantial reform, and checked the spread of religious restraints upon the evil passions of men. But this is a delicate subject, and I must forbear.

"These examples may show that there are certain abstract truths and principles which, however incontrovertible in themselves, like every other good thing, may be, and often are, misconceived and abused in their application. It is the business of statesmen, in

every country, to apply them with safety, and to give them the utmost practical influence and effect consistent with the existing state of society. The most interesting illustration of this sentiment, and the most striking example of the superiority of practical truth over theoretic axioms, in the formation of government, to be found in all history—and one which claims the special attention of the people of this country at this moment—was exhibited by our ancestors, when, with their own recognition of the abstract truth of the equality of natural rights still vibrating on their tongues, they yet fearlessly set their seals to a covenant of union between these States, containing an express recognition of slavery. I say express recognition; because whatever the jesuitical doctors of the North may say, the clauses in the Constitution relating to the importation of persons under certain limitations, and fixing the basis of direct taxes and representation in Congress, I affirm, do amount to an express recognition of slavery."

Search the debates of Congress on this exciting subject from 1790 down to the present time—examine diligently the speeches of the most distinguished leaders of the southern Democracy, Mr. Calhoun and his compeers—pore over all that has been said and written by the whole tribe of southern politicians who have made it a part of their business, in season and out of season, to instil into the southern ear doubts and suspicions of Mr. Bell's "soundness on the slavery question," and say if, among them all, there can be found so masterly a refutation of the accusatory charges urged against the people of the South on account of the existence in their midst of the institution of African slavery.

#### MR. BELL IN 1854—THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA BILL.

We come now to what may justly be considered as the most important act of Mr. Bell's public life—his opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska act. A few brief passages from the two speeches made by him in the Senate on that memorable occasion will suffice to place before the people of the South (where his vote against the bill has been made the subject of bitter condemnation) the motives and reasons by which he was governed. Hear him, fellow-citizens:

*Repeal of the Missouri Compromise—A great practical question—Its probable results considered.*

"If this measure shall appear to be as important to the interests of the country as its friends assume, I shall feel no embarrassment arising from any of the questions to which I have just alluded, in giving my support to the principle of non-intervention, embraced in the provisions of the bill before the Senate. I think it is a wise and expedient principle, for general application, and upon this point, it will be perceived, that there is no difference between myself and any of my Southern friends. It is not a new principle. It was the principle adopted in the compromise acts of 1850, and had my full concurrence and support. But in the application of this principle to the Territories proposed to be organized by this bill, in order to give it a free and unembarrassed operation, it is proposed to repeal the Missouri Compromise; and thus a great practical question is directly presented; and one which, above all others, claims the dispassionate consideration and reflection of every statesman of the country, north and south: *Is it wise, is it expedient to disturb the Missouri Compromise? Does the repeal of the slavery restriction clause of the act of 1820 promise such important and beneficent results to the country that all objections should be yielded?*"

*Missouri restriction unjust to the South.*

"Sir, it is contended that by applying the principle of non-intervention to the Territories, we shall harmonize the action of the government by conforming it to the principle of the compromise acts of 1850. Admitted. It is said that the slavery restriction clause of the act of 1820 was a violation of the obligations of the treaty by which France ceded to the United States the Territory of Louisiana. I admit it. It is contended that the restriction upon slavery imposed by the Missouri Compromise was unjust to the South. That is also true.

"The attempt of the North in 1820 to interdict slavery in Missouri, as a condition of her admission into the Union, and the continued resistance offered to the application of that State for admission, until the South agreed to accept the proposition to interdict slavery in all the remaining territory ceded by France, lying north of the line of 36° 30', was just such a proceeding that the great names invoked by the honorable Senator from Massachusetts, (Mr. Sumner,) to sustain him in his course as an abolitionist—Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, and Hamilton, had they been living at the time, anti-slavery in sentiment though they were, would have raised their united voices against it, as conceived in a spirit the very reverse of that which controlled their own course when they gave



their sanction to the Constitution ; when they contributed the full weight of their great names and characters in conciliating and reconciling the strongest antagonisms of sentiment and interests between the North and the South ; and in blending all in one great organic instrument of Union, unparalleled in the wisdom of its provisions and the grandeur of its results. Jefferson did raise his voice against it, but unhappily his glorious compatriots of the revolution had passed away, and he, in his retirement, was no longer able to control the active passions of the day."

*He fears the consequences of repealing the Missouri Compromise.*

"Having thus gone over all the grounds of objection suggested against the validity of the Missouri Compromise, I trust it will be seen that I am not disposed to controvert them either as to fact or doctrine, with such exceptions only as upon more deliberate consideration, by those who asserted them, will be allowed to be well taken. But, sir, admitting them, with the exceptions I have stated, to be incontrovertibly true, still the main question remains to be considered and decided: *Do these facts and doctrines demonstrate the expediency of disturbing the Missouri Compromise under existing circumstances?* And in coming to an affirmative conclusion upon this point, I hesitate, I pause."

*Probable consequences of the Repeal further considered.*

"I have listened with attention to all the luminous expositions of theories of constitutional construction, and of popular sovereignty ; to the ingenious application of doctrinal points to questions of compacts and compromises by the friends of this measure. The question has been fruitful of themes for dialectic display ; for the exhibition of great powers of analysis and logical acumen ; but the whole argument has been singularly defective and unsatisfactory upon the main question: *What practical advantage or benefit to the country generally, or to the South in particular, will the repeal of the Missouri Compromise secure?*

"It is asserted with great confidence that the application of the principle of non-intervention to these Territories, and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, will have the effect to transfer to the local legislatures, the Territories and States, and to relieve Congress for the future from the most dangerous and distracting subject of controversy which ever has, or ever can disturb its deliberations ; that the source of those sectional conflicts and agitations upon the subject of slavery, which have more than once threatened the peace of the country, will be removed ; that justice will be done to the South ; that the Constitution will be restored and vindicated, and a new guarantee provided for the stability of the Union. I need not say that, *if one-half of the many beneficent results predicted of this measure can be shown to follow as a probable consequence of its adoption*, I would no longer hesitate to give it my support ; but unfortunately the argument has proceeded so further than the affirmation, without showing how these results must or will follow."

*Wisdom of the Repeal doubted.*

"Sir, I believe there is a better feeling prevailing at the North towards the South than formerly ; but would it not be wise on the part of the South to do nothing to reverse the current off that better feeling, unless urged by some great necessity in vindication of its rights?"

*What has the South to gain by it?*

"What has the South to gain by the measure? \* \* \* \* \* Will slavery be established in the Kansas Territory proposed to be organized under its provisions? Does any one who has fully considered the subject, believe that this Territory will become a slave State?"

*He differs with his Southern friends only as to the results of the measure.*

"I have said already, and I repeat, that if I could take the view of the importance of this measure to the country which my southern friends do—cutting off the source of all future controversy between the North and the South—putting an end to agitation in both sections upon the subject of slavery—I would feel justified in waving all my objections to this bill, and in uniting heartily with them in its support. *We differ only as to the results of the measure.*"

The foregoing extracts are from the first speech of Mr. Bell on the Kansas-Nebraska bill, delivered in the Senate on the 3d of March, 1854. (See Appendix to Congressional Globe, vol. 29, page 407.)

From his second speech on the bill, delivered on the 24th and 25th of May, 1854, we make the subjoined extracts, for which see Congressional Globe, vol. 29, pages 947-958.



*Probable consequences of the Repeal further considered.*

"The people of Tennessee will doubt the propriety and wisdom of adding fuel to the flame kindled by the abolitionists of the North, by repealing the Missouri Compromise. They will see that it must and will have a bad effect on the steady, sober, patriotic, national men of the North. *There are many gentlemen at the South who may not care what consequences may flow from such a course.* The people of Tennessee have sense enough, judgment and penetration enough, to perceive that, though the feeling of the North, excited by the passage of this bill, may be restrained within such bounds as not to threaten *immediate disunion*, yet that, perhaps, no more fugitive slaves may be captured and returned from the North, and that the swelling tide of fanaticism, and the more intense sentiment of hostility to the institutions of the South, created by this bill, may lead to such excess that irritation and resentment will be, in turn, excited and kindled into flame at the South; and that *then* we shall find all the fears and apprehensions of civil war and disunion renewed, which spread consternation throughout the land in 1850."

*Squatter Sovereignty.*

"As to the principle of 'squatter sovereignty,' I wish further to say, that in the late contest between General Taylor and the honorable and distinguished Senator from Michigan, [General Cass,] it was distinctly brought forward as an issue before the people of Tennessee. \* \* \* \* \* In that contest, in common with the South generally, they [the people of Tennessee] repudiated the idea that a handful or any number of inhabitants, in a Territory of the United States, should have the power granted to them by Congress of regulating their domestic institutions, and at their discretion to deny to the citizen of one section of the Union the power to enjoy his right of property in slaves. We were not prepared to reverse and set aside the previously established practice and doctrines of the Government, from 1789 to that time. We could see no peace, no quiet, no end of agitation that was to result from such a course. We thought that, if a Territorial Legislature should in one or two years establish or abolish slavery, the agitation of the question of slavery would still go on. We in Tennessee at that time believed we were advocating principles and doctrines on this subject approved in all the Southern States. The principle *then* contended for was that the people of a Territory, *when they come to form their State Constitution, AND THEN ONLY*, were qualified to establish their domestic institutions."

*Must discharge his duty to the Country at whatever sacrifice.*

"When I informed honorable Senators that I did not hold myself committed to this bill, I was told by some of my friends, that if I opposed the bill, such a course would be utterly destructive to me; that it would lead to a disruption of the Whig party in Tennessee, and furnish a plausible ground for imputations upon my motives. And those friendly warnings were given to me up to the time of the final vote in the Senate. \* \*

\* \* \* Sir, when a question is presented here involving great principles of any kind, when any great measure is proposed, and a man occupying a responsible position becomes strongly impressed with the conviction that its adoption would have a deep, and permanent, and injurious effect upon the future prospects of the country, threatening the stability of the Constitution and the Union itself, he should be willing to sacrifice himself, and surrender all prospects that may be held out to him which stand in conflict with his duty. Why should a man abandon his convictions upon such a question for the sake of doubtful political chances? I consider the position of a Senator of the United States, which I now enjoy, as the noblest and most independent that any American citizen can occupy—the noblest and most desirable to any man who will boldly do his duty. Sir, I acknowledge my weaknesses. I know that kind feelings and a deference for the opinions of others have often induced me to give my support to measures of inferior importance, which my judgment did not approve. But when a great question is presented; when I have deliberately reflected upon it; when I have lights before me by which to guide my course, whatever sacrifices of political standing may be required of me, whatever obstacles and embarrassments of any kind may stand in my way, I trust I shall always have the firmness to do what, upon deliberate reflection, I consider my duty to the country."

*A Conservative sentiment at the North—Danger of alienating it.*

"I wish honorable Senators to understand, that if I thought there was really any great principle to be established or settled by this bill, of importance or value to the South, and to the country generally, it would be a different question. But I must not be di-

verted from the issue made with me, that there is no great body of conservative and national Whigs at the North, ready to stand by the South on questions affecting their rights and institutions. I deny the assertion. I know that there is a large body of patriotic and noble Whigs at the North, who, though they do not approve this bill, have steadily opposed the Abolition movement at the North, from its inception, and have always deprecated all agitation on the subject of slavery. They, like all northern men, have been, from training and education, opposed to slavery; but they have been trained to respect and revere the Constitution and its compromises; and they have shown their determination to respect and stand by the compromises of 1850, in their unwavering efforts to silence opposition to the fugitive slave law, and to secure its faithful execution. And, sir, I would inquire of those who assert that there is no sound national Whig party at the North, what has become of that noble Whig phalanx at the North, who stood by and sustained Daniel Webster in his bold advocacy of the compromises of 1850. Where the supporters of Millard Fillmore at the North? Where the Union Whigs of New York? Where the conservative spirit which prompted five hundred of the most respectable citizens of Boston, said to be the very hot-bed of fanaticism, to enroll themselves as special constables to secure the execution of the fugitive slave law? Is there no consideration due to the position of such Whigs as those at the North in deciding upon measures so well calculated as the present to weaken their position and influence, or rather, to use the forcible language of the Attorney General, 'to crush them out?'

"But, sir, there is a conservative sentiment in the North, outside the ranks of those Whigs known as the supporters of Mr. Webster and Mr. Fillmore, even among those denominated Free-soilers, or the opponents of the extension of slave territory, belonging to the Whig and Democratic parties: I allude to those who acquiesced in the compromises of 1850—those who are opposed to the plans of the abolition organization, and entertain no purpose of pressing their anti-slavery feelings and doctrines to the point of disunion. Is there any wisdom or sound policy in adopting a measure not called for by any public necessity or interest, but so well calculated to incite that large class of northern citizens to form combinations which may lead to a permanent alienation between the North and the South?"

*Rise of the Republican party predicted as a consequence of the Repeal.*

"Sir, the tendency of this bill is to stimulate the formation of a sectional party organization. And as I said in my speech on the passage of the Senate bill, I regard that as the last and most fatal evil which can befall this country, except the dissolution of the Union; and that last and greatest calamity to the country, the success of such a movement would infallibly bring about. I trust, sir, that my fears on this subject will prove to be groundless, and that no such results as I have indicated will ever be realized."

MR BELL IN 1856—ADMISSION OF KANSAS.

The following are extracts from a speech made by Mr. Bell in the Senate, on the 2d of July, 1856, on the bill to authorize the people of Kansas to form a Constitution and State Government preparatory to their admission into the Union:

HE ADVOCATES ITS EARLY ADMISSION.

"Whoever has looked closely into this subject, and comprehends all its bearings, must be satisfied that, though we may remove some of the more fruitful sources of the existing disturbances in Kansas, dissension and discord will still continue, not only in Kansas, but throughout the country, until Kansas shall become a State. The excitement and agitation at the North may be expected to continue, even with increased intensity, so long as their remains any prospect of the success of the pro-slavery party, in order to unite and consolidate public sentiment in opposition to the admission of Kansas as a slave State. Can the country—can the Union, stand five years of unmitigated agitation upon this distracting subject? It seems inevitable that agitation must continue through the present canvass for the Presidency. There is no remedy for that evil. Had I the power, by my voice, I would paralyze—I would crush this many-headed monster—this Kansas hydra at once; but, as that is impossible, I protest against the extension of this controversy into the next ensuing contest for the purple. I protest against that, as equally unnecessary and perilous."

*Practical Workings of Squatter Sovereignty.*

"This principle of popular sovereignty, connected, as it was in this case, with the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, was thought by its friends to be of such transcendent



importance, that when the Nebraska bill passed the Senate, at a late hour of the 2d of March, 1854, the inhabitants of the national metropolis were awakened from their slumbers by peal after peal of deep-mouthed artillery, announcing the glad tidings that the great principle of popular sovereignty was triumphant; that justice was vindicated by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise; that the reign of the Constitution would now be restored, and that slavery agitation would return no more to vex the land! As though some great victory had crowned our arms over a public enemy, as at Buena Vista or Cerro Gordo heights, the reverberations of the cannon had scarcely ceased, when the same joyful tidings were carried with electric speed to every quarter of the Union.

"I trust I may be permitted, without offence, to say that, in a long tract of time, no example can be found of a delusion engendered in the heat of controversy, more complete than that which appears to have taken possession of those who pressed the Nebraska bill to its final passage through Congress. Where, now, do we find the realization of those pleasing dreams which doubtless inspired the authors of that measure?"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Mr. President, I do not wish to say any thing that can be considered offensive: but I must say I do not know any way in which I can so well illustrate the true character and tendency of the organic law of Kansas, as by comparing it to the preliminary arrangements which usually attend the sports of the ring. Without any far-fetched analogy, that law may be said to have inaugurated a great national prize fight. The ample lists were regularly marked out—they were the boundaries of Kansas. The two great sections of the Union, the North and the South, were to furnish the champions and to be their backers. The prize of victory was to be a slave State on the one side and a free State on the other. But as the victory was to be decided by the number of the champions, to encourage their enlistment and prompt attendance, the prize of a choice quarter section of land, at the minimum price, was to be awarded to the champions on either side.

"When we consider that the champions on both sides of this great national contest were deeply imbued, for the most part, with adverse principles, sentiments and prejudices, on the subject of slavery, excited and inflamed almost to frenzy by recent and violent agitation; and that the inhabitants of the western counties of Missouri would naturally become sensitive and excited in the highest degree by the prospect of a free State on their borders, it is not extravagant to assert that, had the most inventive genius of the age been called upon for a scheme of policy combining all the elements of slavery agitation, in such a manner as to insure the greatest amount of disorder, personal and neighborhood feuds, border disturbance, and bloodshed, in Kansas, leading, at the same time, to permanent sectional alienation, he could not have succeeded better than by adopting the provisions of the Kansas-Nebraska bill."

*He insists upon the importance of a speedy adjustment.*

"Sir, months ago, when authority was first given by the President to Governor Shannon to call to his aid the military force of the United States then at Fort Leavenworth, we were told that there would be no further disturbances; but we have been disappointed. The disorders have rather increased than diminished since that time. It may be that there will be no more unauthorized military arrays on either side; but will that cure the evil? Every settler in Kansas now goes armed, and prepared for sudden conflict; and does any one suppose that any future emigrant to that Territory will fail to equip himself fully with the means of self-defence? Does any one suppose that there will be no more secret associations, no longer any system of intimidation kept up, no longer any use for the bowie-knife, revolver, or Sharpe's rifles? Again, I ask, where is all this to end? Can quiet ever be established unless one party or the other is driven out by force, or shall voluntarily abandon the contest, or until Congress shall adopt some measure to end the controversy?"

"And, sir, what forbids that we should now adopt some measure, *with provisions so fair and just in all respects*, that it cannot fail to mitigate, if it cannot remove altogether, existing evils, and in the shortest period *consistent with this spirit of fairness and justice*, bring the whole matter in controversy to a close, by admitting Kansas into the Union as a State? Do this, and we may leave the issues in the hands of a high power. \* \* \*

"Settle this slavery controversy when we may, now or at any time, or in any way, the best that can be devised, whatever section may have a triumph, there will remain, on the side of the vanquished, a deep and rankling feeling of discontent and alienation; and a whole generation must pass away before they will cease to mar, to some extent, the general harmony. On the question whether Kansas shall be a free or a Slave State, as a representative of Southern interests, my preference, of course, is for a slave State. But, sir, if in a fair competition it must be so, let it be a free State, let it be retro-



ceded to the Indians, the aboriginal occupants of the soil; let it become a nother Dead Sea, rather than continue the pestilent source of mortal disease to our system."

#### MR. BELL IN 1858—THE LECOMPTON CONSTITUTION.

In the speech made by Mr. Bell in the Senate, on the 18th of March, 1858, on the Lecompton Constitution bill, there occur the following passages:

##### *Issues between the North and the South—Estimating the value of the Union.*

"It is more than indicated; it is boldly assumed by some gentlemen that the rejection of this measure will be regarded as a decision that no more slave States are to be admitted into the Union, and the consequences which may follow such a decision are pointed to in no equivocal language. There is no gentleman here with whom I differ as to the value of the union of these States, to whom I do not accord honesty and patriotism of purpose. There is simply between us a difference in judgment as to the true interest of this great country; the true interest of the South as well as the North, connected with the Union. When my attention is invited to the consideration of the advantages and blessings that may follow disunion to the South, I shun the subject as one that is speculative only, and prematurely brought forward. That is a field of inquiry into which I do not propose now to enter. When an issue is made; when a question does arise demanding such an inquiry as that, I shall be ready to enter upon it, and to estimate the value of the Union; but I will not anticipate the occurrence of any such contingency. When the North shall, by any deliberate act, deprive the South of any fair, and just, and equal participation in the benefits of the Union—if, for example, the Territory now proposed to be admitted into the Union as a State, had not been subject to an interdict of slavery for thirty years—if it were a Territory such as that lying west of Arkansas, by climate adapted to slave labor, and by population already a slave Territory; and if, on application of such a Territory for admission into the Union as a slave State, the powerful North, without any of the feelings and resentments naturally growing out of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in regard to Kansas, should deliberately announce to the South, 'you shall have no more slave States,' that would afford a pretext with which the South might with some reason, and with some assurance of the approval of the civilized world and of posterity, seek to dissolve the Union. I know that it is supposed by some, that the day will come when the North, in the arrogance of its power, will furnish just such a pretext as I have indicated; and the Senator from Georgia and others have argued this question on the ground that it will come; but I must see it come before I will calculate the value of this Union. I trust that day will never come. I do not believe it will come, if the South is wise and true to itself. I would not have them truckle or surrender any of their rights. I would not have them yield one jot or tittle of their rights; but I would have them make no questionable issues in advance, stir up no strife upon unnecessary abstract questions, having no practical value; but to do always what is just and right upon all questions. When a people or a Territory applies for admission into the Union under a constitution fairly formed, with the assent of the people excluding slavery, I would admit it promptly; and when an application comes, on the other hand, from the people of a Territory who have fairly formed a constitution recognizing slavery, I would insist upon its admission as a slave State. If the North should not agree to this, it would then be time enough to consider of the proper remedy. But I would make no issue with the North now, and before any occasion for it has arisen; and I regret most sincerely to hear any Senator from the North suggesting that such an issue will ever be tendered from that quarter."

##### WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE?

"With regard to the present question, I lay down as the basis of my conclusion as to what ought to be done, that the solution of it which promises the speediest termination of this dangerous slavery agitation is the true one. This dangerous agitation has continued long enough. There has been no mitigation of it in the last four years. There have been intervals of apparent repose, but it was just such repose as foreboded increased disorder and commotion. It is time to terminate it.

The question is, What is that solution which promises the speediest and most permanent remedy for these difficulties? Divine that to me, whoever can, and I will follow his lead. How shall we cut this Gordian knot of Kansas politics? Shall we cut it by the sword? Shall we first subdue the rebellious faction, said to exist in Kansas, by force of arms, or shall we endeavor to unravel this tangled skein by some more peaceful means?"

*Frauds and Irregularities of the Lecompton Constitution.*

"My friend from Florida [Mr. Mallory] said, in his able speech the other day, that it would be difficult to persuade the people of the South that if this Constitution be rejected by Congress, it will not be upon the ground that it recognizes slavery. That it also the opinion of the honorable Senator from Georgia and others. Unless it be that these honorable Senators want some immediate pretext for a movement in the South, I advise them to investigate this question more fully than they seem to have done, before they conclude to make the rejection of this measure, should it be rejected, a *causus disjunctionis* [a case for disunion.] We are told that it will be difficult to persuade the people of the South that any other objection exists to this Constitution except that it recognises slavery, and these opinions are avowed in the face of accumulated frauds and irregularities connected with its history, and though it is clear that four-fifths of the people of Kansas are opposed to it.

"It will not do for these gentlemen to say that there is no record or other satisfactory proof to show the frauds and irregularities alleged against the Lecompton Constitution, or any other statements made by the opponents of this measure in relation to the state of things existing in Kansas. The supporters of this measure in the Senate and in the House of Representatives, have obstinately persisted in voting down every proposition to investigate and take proof upon the contested questions of fact; and I take it for granted that this course would not have been persisted in, unless it was understood that the facts would turn out as they have been charged. If I have not wholly misconceived and misstated the material points in the history of Kansas affairs which preceded the formation of the Lecompton Constitution; if I have not misrepresented the facts connected with its formation; if I am not wholly mistaken in the views I have presented of the existing state of public sentiment in Kansas in relation to this Constitution, is it becoming the character of the national Legislature to accept this instrument as the organic law of the new State which is proposed to be admitted into the Union?

"Is it fit, is it becoming the Senate of the United States, to stamp this Constitution with all its attending circumstances, with their approval, and send it to Kansas to be abided by or resisted to blood by the people there? Surely, sir, there ought to be some great and overruling political necessity existing in the condition of affairs to justify such a proceeding."

*The passage of the Lecompton Bill would strengthen Republicanism.*

"I now ask the attention of the Senate to the effect of the experiment localizing slavery agitation in the Territories made in 1854, in changing the complexion of parties both in Congress and in the country. In the Congress which passed the Kansas-Nebraska bill, we have seen that there was, at the commencement of the session in December, 1853, a Democratic majority of eighty-four in the House of Representatives, and only four Free-Soilers; and in the Senate a like number [of the latter]—so small, yet so distinct in their principles, that neither of the two great parties then known to the country knew well how to arrange them on committees. \* \* \* Now, let us see what was the effect of the Kansas-Nebraska act on the elections which ensued in the fall of 1854, just on the heels of the adoption of that measure. One hundred and seven Free-Soilers were returned to the House of Representatives; and the Democratic party, instead of having a majority of eighty-four in that House, found itself in a minority of seventy-six; and in the Senate the number of Free-Soilers was increased to thirteen. Such was the complexion of the two Houses of Congress in the thirty-third Congress, which assembled in December, 1855. Now, we find in the Senate twenty Free-Soilers. How many more they may have in the next Congress will depend upon the disposition we make of the question now before the Senate. I call upon the Senator from Georgia to say whether he will have that number limited or not. Does he want a sufficient number to prevent the ratification of any future treaty of acquisition? How long will it be before we have that number, if the southern Democracy persist in their present course? They would seem to be deeply interested in adding to the power of the Republican party. I consider the most fearful and portentous of all the results of the Kansas-Nebraska act was to create, to build up a great sectional party. \* \* I consider that no more ominous and threatening cloud can darken the political horizon at any time. How formidable this party has already become, may be well illustrated by the fact that its representative candidate, Mr. Fremont, was only beaten in the Presidential election by the most desperate efforts; and I feel warranted in saying, that but for the eminent prospect of his success which shone out near the close of the canvass, Mr. Buchanan would not have attained his present high position. \* \* \* \* \*

"In the closing debate on the Kansas-Nebraska bill, I told his supporters that they could do nothing more certain to disturb the composure of the two Senators on the opposite side of the chamber, the one from Massachusetts, [Mr. Sumner] and the other from Ohio, [Mr. Chase] than to reject that bill. Its passage was the only thing in the range of possible events by which their political fortunes could be resuscitated, so completely had the Free-Soil movement at the North been paralyzed by the Compromise measures of 1850. I say now to the advocates of this [the Leecompton] measure, if they want to strengthen the Republican party, and give the reins of Government into their hands, pass this bill. If they desire to weaken the power of that party, and arrest the progress of slavery agitation, reject it. And, if it is their policy to put an end to the agitation connected with Kansas affairs at the earliest day practicable, as they say it is, then let them remit this constitution back to the people of Kansas for their ratification or rejection. In that way the whole difficulty will be settled before the adjournment of the present session of Congress, without the violation of any sound principle, or the sacrifice of the rights of either section of the Union."

*Mr. Bell replies to the complaints of the North against the South, and calls upon the followers of Mr. Seward "to arrest him in his mad career."*

"The honorable Senator from New York farther announced to us, in exultant tones, that 'at last there was a north side of this Chamber, a north side of the Chamber of the House of Representatives, and a north side of the Union, as well as a south side of all these;' and he admonished us that the time was at hand when freedom would assert its due influence in the regulation of the domestic and foreign policy of the country.

"When was there a time in the history of the Government that there was no north side of this Chamber and of the other? When was there a time that there was not a proud array of northern men in both Chambers, distinguished by their genius and ability, devoted to the interests of the North, and successful in maintaining them?

"Though it may be true that southern men have filled the executive chair for much the largest portion of the time that has elapsed since the organization of the Government, yet when, in what instance was it, that a southerner has been elected to that high station without the support of a majority of the freemen of the North?

"Do you of the North complain that the policy of the Government, under the long continued influence of southern Presidents, has been injurious or fatal to your interests? Has it paralyzed your industry? Has it crippled your resources? Has it impaired your energies? Has it checked your progress in any one department of human effort? Let your powerful mercantile marine, your ships whitening every sea—the fruit of wise commercial regulations and navigation laws; let your flourishing agriculture, your astonishing progress in manufacturing skill, your great canals, your thousands of miles of railroads, your vast trade, internal and external, your proud cities, and your accumulated millions of moneyed capital, ready to be invested in profitable enterprises in any part of the world—answer that question. Do you complain of a narrow and jealous policy under southern rule, in extending and opening new fields of enterprise to your hardy sons in the great West, along the line of the great chain of American lakes, even to the headwaters of the father of rivers, and over the rich and fertile plains stretching southward from the lake shores? Let the teeming populations; let the hundreds of millions of annual products that have succeeded to the but recent dreary and unproductive haunts of the red man—answer that question. That very preponderance of free States which the Senator from New York contemplates with such satisfaction, and which has moved him exultingly to exclaim that there is at last a north side of this Chamber, has been hastened by the liberal policy of southern Presidents and southern statesmen, and has it become the ambition of that Senator to unite and combine all this great, rich, and powerful north in the policy of crippling the resources and repressing the power of the South? Is this to be the one idea which is to mould the policy of the Government, when that gentleman and his friends shall control it? If it be, then I appeal to the better feelings and the better judgment of his followers to arrest him in his mad career. Sir, let us have some brief interval of repose at least from this eternal agitation of the slavery question."

*The Union—How only it can be saved.*

"Let power go into whatever hands it may, let us save the Union! I have all the confidence other gentlemen can have in the extent to which this Union is intrenched in the hearts of the great mass of the people of the North and South; but when I reflect upon and consider the desperate and dangerous extremes to which ambitious party leaders are often prepared to go, without meaning to do the country any mischief, in the struggle



for the imperial power, the crown of the American Presidency, I sometimes tremble for its fate.

"Two great parties are now dividing the Union on this question. It is evident, to every man of sense, who examines it, that practically, in respect to slavery, the result will be the same both to North and South; Kansas will be a free State, no matter what may be the decision on this question. But how that decision may effect the fortunes of those parties, is not certain, and is the chief difficulty. But the great question of all is how will that decision affect the country as a whole?"

"Two adverse yet concurrent and mighty forces are driving the vessel of State towards the rocks upon which she must split, unless she receives timely aid—a paradox, yet expressive of a momentous and perhaps a fatal truth. There is no hope of rescue unless the sober-minded men, both of the North and South, shall by some sufficient influence, be brought to adopt the wise maxims and sage counsels of the great founders of the Government."

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS.

It is particularly worthy of notice, that Mr. Bell's traducers have *never* assailed any sentiment, doctrine, or principle enounced by him on the subject of slavery. Their objections lie, and are limited—

1. To his vote in favor of receiving and acting upon abolition petitions, as a matter of sound policy on the part of the representatives from the South, and in view of the injurious results which he believed would follow the adoption of the opposite policy. The results turned out to be what he thought and said they would; and his course was ultimately vindicated, in the fullest manner, by the repeal of the "Twenty-First Rule," after an experience of four years, by a House of Representatives numbering two Democrats to one Whig!

2. To his opposition to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, which he based *solely* upon what he foresaw and predicted would be the "*results*." He could find no warrant in the Constitution for the clause in the act of 1820, restricting slavery by the line of 36-30. He regarded such restrictions as unjust to the South, and in violation of the treaty by which the territory was acquired from France. He had voted in 1850 to repeal the Mexican laws prohibiting slavery in New Mexico, which were in force at the time of the acquisition. But when it came to voting for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, which had been peacefully acquiesced in for thirty years, he apprehended dangerous *consequences* to the South and to the whole country from the adoption of the measure. He looked at the probable *results* of the measure, and guided, as he expressly declared, entirely by the conclusion which his mind came to as to what those results would be, he voted against the repeal, and in so voting, as the results proved, he voted against the creation of the Republican party! It would be a gross libel on the majority who repealed the Missouri Compromise, to suppose they would have done it, had they been gifted with the foresight of Mr. Bell, and seen, as his far-reaching sagacity enabled him to do, the deplorable consequences which followed from it.

No higher tribuna could be rendered to any man than that which is unwittingly paid to Mr. Bell by the entire array, vast as it is, of Democratic leaders, speakers and writers throughout the South, when they call upon the people of the South, as they are every day doing, by uniting under the Democratic flag, to interpose a barrier to the onward march of Republicanism—when they expatiate upon the danger to Southern institutions of the government's falling into the hands of the Republicans—when they proclaim that danger to be so great, that the South ought never to submit to the inauguration of the Republican candidate, if elected. Had Mr. Bell's prudent counsels—his wise admonitions—his earnest remonstrances been heeded, there would this day have been no Republican party, and the country would now be in the enjoyment of that repose and freedom from slavery agitation which President Pierce congratulated it upon possessing at the date of his installation into the Presidential office.

3. To his vote against the Lecompton Constitution bill. He voted, his accusers say, against admitting Kansas into the Union as a slave State. "A slave State!" The Democrats of Tennessee know, and will give ready credence to Gen. Whitfield, their former fellow-citizen and active co-laborer in the cause of Democracy, who removed to Kansas at an early day. In his speech against the Lecompton bill, Mr. Bell quoted the following extract of a letter, written by Gen. Whitfield to the editor of the Washington Union, dated Washington City, September 2, 1858:

"I have seen the letter addressed by Dr. Tebbs to a gentleman in this city. His letter fully and fairly represents the condition of parties in Kansas, both before and after the advent of Governor Walker; and I have been perfectly astonished, upon my arrival here, to find the crusade from the South upon Governor Walker, charging him with an at-

tempt to "abolitionize Kansas." It required no action from Governor Walker to make Kansas a free State. Its doom, if it is fixed, was fixed long before Robert J. Walker ever entered the Territory.

"I repeat again, sir, that knowing Dr. Tebbs well, and knowing him to be thoroughly posted upon Kansas affairs, I endorse fully his views and conclusions as expressed in his letter to you."

From the letter of Doctor Tebbs, referred to in Gen. Whitfield's letter, Mr. Bell quoted the following paragraph:

"That in January, 1857, four or five months before Governor Walker arrived in the Territory, the pro-slavery party held a Convention of all the members of the Legislature and delegates from every county in the Territory, to discuss the condition of parties, and leading pro-slavery men deliberately declared it as their opinion that the pro-slavery party proper was in a hopeless minority."

This Doctor Tebbs was represented in the same number of the *Union* in which his letter was published, as a "Virginian by birth, a slaveholder, and one of the early settlers of Kansas," who had been a "member of the Legislature since Kansas had become a Territory," and whose "radical views on the slavery question had rendered him peculiarly obnoxious to the Black Republicans of the Territory."

Mr. Bell's opposition to the Lecompton bill, therefore, took place in view of the highest Democratic evidence in the Territory—that "the pro-slavery party proper [in the Territory] was in a hopeless minority!"

Mr. Bell also, by authentic facts and figures, demonstrated that an overwhelming majority of the qualified voters of the Territory were opposed to the Lecompton Constitution. In view of these facts, Mr. Bell argued, that to impose that Constitution on the unwilling majority of the people of Kansas—large and overwhelming as it was—would be an act of arbitrary power on the part of Congress, in violation of a fundamental principle of all free institutions, and which, under all the circumstances connected with it, could be of no sort of advantage to the South, while, on the other hand, the inevitable effect of it would be further to excite the North against the south, and to give increased strength and vitality to the Republican organization.

The Republicans had already twenty Senators. How long would it, Mr. Bell asked, be before they would have a sufficient number (one-third) to prevent the ratification of any treaty of acquisition, if the Southern Democracy persisted in their course? The Southern Democracy did persist, and the result was as Mr. Bell saw and foretold; the Republican Senators have been increased to more than the requisite number, to enable them to reject any treaty they may see fit to reject.

Did the advocates of the Lecompton bill, Mr. Bell further asked, want to strengthen the Republican party and give the reins of Government into their hands? If they did, let them pass the bill. Did they desire to lessen the power of the Republican party, and arrest the progress of slavery agitation? If they did, let them reject the bill, and send the Constitution back to the people of Kansas for their ratification or rejection. These are the grounds upon which Mr. Bell opposed the passage of the Lecompton Constitution bill. If well taken, they fully justify Mr. Bell's course. Who, at this day, will say that they were not well taken? What candid man will censure Mr. Bell for acting as he did upon those grounds?

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#### MR. EVERETT THIRTY YEARS AGO.

There is a peculiar fitness in the candidates of the Union party to stand before the people as the exponents of the platform of the Union, the Constitution, and the enforcement of the laws. From the commencement of their public career, throughout all their service in the councils of the nation, and in every public and private capacity, they have both been distinguished for their strong devotion to the union of the States, their unwavering maintenance of the Constitution of the country, and their rigid requirement that the laws should be justly enforced. Upon the vexed and vexatious slavery question they have occupied precisely this position and no other. They have carefully avoided the extreme prejudices and opinions prevailing in their respective sections of the country, and have preserved an inviolable nationality.

Mr. Bell, representing in Congress and in the United States Senate a southern constituency, has never faltered in his defence of the rights of the people of the southern States

from any assault, and his record presents no single point of objection to the national-minded men of the South. His past career is to them a sufficient guaranty that in his hands and under his administration of public affairs their rights, their interests, their honor will be safe and well protected. But while he is firm in the defence of State rights, his course has been guided so truly and undeviatingly by the provisions and compromises of the Constitution, that his eminent justice and nationality and patriotism has endeared him more than any other southern statesman to the conservative, Union-loving, Constitution-abiding citizens of the North, and they have for him a respect and admiration that defy the calumnies and assaults of any opponents.

Side by side with John Bell in the maintenance of the Union, the Constitution, and the equal rights of the States, stands Edward Everett. Upon the slavery question no northern man occupies a more national position, or is more acceptable to the people of the South. Again and again, in reference to this subject, he has expressed his determination to abide, in good faith, by the compromises of the Constitution. Upon all necessary occasions he has boldly advocated the prompt and faithful execution of the fugitive slave law, and sternly opposed the agitation of the slavery question. In reference to attempts to excite servile insurrection in the southern States, no orator has ever spoken more eloquently or in terms of more decided reprobation. To use his own bold and manly language, he does not think, as far too many northern people do, that it is "*immoral and irreligious to join in putting down a servile insurrection at the South.*" "*THERE IS NO CAUSE,*" he bravely and patriotically proclaims, "*IN WHICH I WOULD SOONER BUCKLE A KNAPSACK TO MY BACK AND PUT A MUSKET ON MY SHOULDER THAN THAT.*"

A correspondent of a southern contemporary recently called attention to a speech made by Mr. Everett during the earlier part of his service in Congress, when, with prophetic vision, he foresaw the deplorable consequences of abolition agitation, and eloquently defended the compromises of the Constitution. In that speech Mr. Everett said:

"If there are any members in this House of that class of politicians to whom the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Saunders) alluded, as having the disposition, though not the power, to disturb the compromise contained in the Constitution on this point, (the three-fifths representative principle,) I am not of the number. Neither am I one of those citizens of the north to whom another honorable member lately referred, in a publication to which his name was subscribed, who would think it immoral and irreligious to join in putting down a servile insurrection at the South. I am no soldier, sir; my habits and education are unmilitary; but there is no cause in which I would sooner buckle a knapsack to my back, and put a musket on my shoulder, than that. I would cede the whole continent to any one who would take it—to England, to France, to Spain—I would see it sunk to the bottom of the ocean before I would see any part of this fine America converted into a continental Hayti, by that awful process of bloodshed and desolation by which alone such a catastrophe could be brought on. The great relation to servitude in some form or other, with greater or less departures from the theoretic equality of man, is inseparable from our nation. I know of no other way by which the form of this servitude shall be fixed but by political institution. Domestic slavery, though I confess not that form of servitude which seems to be the most beneficial to the master—certainly that which is most beneficial to the slave—is not, in my judgment, to be set down as an immoral and irreligious relation.

"I cannot admit that religion has but one voice to the slave, and that this voice is, 'Rise against your master.' No, sir; the New Testament says, 'slaves, obey your master; and though I know full well, that in the benignant operation of Christianity, which gathered master and slave around the same communion table, this unfortunate institution disappeared in Europe, yet I cannot admit that while it subsists, and where it subsists, its duties are not presupposed and sanctioned by religion. And though I certainly am not called upon to meet the charges brought against this institution, yet truth obliges me to say a word more on the subject.

"I know the condition of working classes in other countries; I am intimately acquainted with it in some other countries: and I have no hesitation in saying that I believe the slaves in this country are better clothed and fed, and less hardly worked, than the peasantry of some of the most prosperous States of the continent of Europe. To consider the checks on population, read Malthus. What keeps population down? Poverty, want, starvation, disease, and all the ills of life; it is these that check population all over the world. Now, the slave population in the United States increases faster than the white, masters included.

"What is the inference as to the physical condition of the two classes of society? These are opinions I have long entertained, and long since publicly professed on this subject, and which I here repeat in answer to the intimation to which I have already alluded. But, sir, when slavery comes to enter into the Constitution as a political



element—when it comes to affect the distribution of power among the States of the Union, that is a matter of agreement. If I make an agreement on this subject, I will adhere to it like a man, but I will protest against any interference being made from it of the kind which was made by the honorable mover of these resolutions.”

These noble and patriotic sentiments of Mr. Everett will be appreciated. They will sound gratefully in the ears of the conservative men North and South. They are in marked contrast with the diabolical expressions of the favorite of Republicanism, Charles Sumner, and are quite different in tone from any of the expressions of northern sentiment that have been uttered recently by prominent men of any party in the North. This speech of Edward Everett, containing the boldest, the manliest, and most just vindication of the South ever uttered by a northern man upon the floor of Congress, will carry conviction to the hearts of southern men that its author will be guided only by sound, and safe, and conservative, and patriotic principles in the performance of every public duty. The Union men—conservative men of all parties in the South and in the North—may be proud to give their support to candidates who present a record of such proud nationality as John Bell and Edward Everett.

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MR. EVERETT ON THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

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BOSTON, June 18, 1860.

DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 12th was received by Mr. Everett this day. When he accepted the nomination of the Baltimore Union Convention, it was with the understanding that the correspondence which might grow out of it, should devolve on the Union Committee here. Your letter of the 12th has accordingly been placed in my hands, and as you request an answer that will reach you by return of mail, I have but a few moments to prepare it in.

The Compromise measures of 1850 were regarded and have been supported by conservative men at the North, as a fair and practicable basis of united political action between the two great sections of the country. To those measures Mr. Everett gave his full concurrence.

The papers enclosed in your letter, viz: the resolves of the Massachusetts Legislature, Mr. Borden's letter, and Mr. Everett's reply, date from the year 1839. They were brought before the Senate of the United States in 1841, at the time of his nomination as minister to England, and I made the ground of a motion for its rejection. Henry Clay opposed that motion with great warmth, and said “that if through the influence of the South, the appointment of a man of Mr. Everett's known conservative opinions was rejected, the Union was already dissolved.” At the close of a fervid speech by Rufus Choate, in support of Mr. Everett's appointment, the late Hon. W. C. Preston exclaimed, “I am afraid I have committed myself to vote against him, but by heaven he shall not be rejected.” Mr. Preston was heard to say that “he regretted that vote more than any ever given by him.” Mr. Everett's nomination as the first minister to China, two years later, was, I believe, unanimously confirmed in the same Senate, of which Mr. Vice President King and Mr. Calhoun were members. His nomination as Secretary of State on the death of Mr. Webster was unanimously confirmed in 1852. In the following year he was elected, by the conservative members of the Legislature of Massachusetts, to the Senate of the United States.

Mr. Everett's views with reference to the sectional agitation now distracting the country, if left in any doubt by his own course, are sufficiently shown by the bitter hostility of the entire anti-slavery press. They were re-affirmed, to the great acceptance of good patriots throughout the Union, in his speech at Faneuil Hall, on the occasion of the attempt at Harper's Ferry; and they are re-stated in his letter signifying his reluctant acceptance of the Baltimore nomination.

I will only observe, in conclusion, that as it seems to us here, no good can result from a review of all that has been said or written North or South, for twenty or thirty years, on the question which now more than ever distracts the country. Reasonable men will not, in either section, expect to find entire concurrence in the other; and if sentiments like those entertained, and on all proper occasions avowed by Mr. Everett, fail to win the confidence of Union-loving men at the South, Mr. Clay's emphatic exclamation in 1841, may well be repeated.

I remain, dear Sir, in haste, very respectfully yours,  
LEVERETT SALTONSTALL,

President State Central Committee of the Constitutional Union Party.

To JOSEPH W. TAYLOR, Esq., Eutaw, Alabama.

The Memphis Bulletin accompanies the publication of the above letter with the following apposite remarks:

"Read this letter again. Mark the fact that in 1852, the year in which the National Democracy met in convention at Baltimore, and adopted the Compromise of 1850 as a part of their platform, Mr. Everett was unanimously confirmed by a Democratic Senate as Secretary of State. Mark the other general facts stated in this letter. Mark the fact that he is now acting against, and always has acted against the abolition party. He is now in opposition to the Republicans. If he is now in sympathy with them, why does he not go with them? There is nothing the Republicans would not give him were he a member of their party. Turn to our back numbers and read what we have from time to time published from Mr. Everett. No honest mind believes he is an enemy to the South. Every honest mind knows that he is true and loyal to all divisions of the Union.

"But if Democrats will try Mr. Everett by his ancient record, they must take all that record together, and not garble it to make out their case. Or if they will not admit the possibility of modification of opinion on his part, even in the presence of the testimony to that effect, they must make him no exception, but judge all men by the standard they have created. That is fair—nothing less would be honest. Judging Democratic statesmen by this Democratic standard, the Natchez Courier asks, 'where would stand Gov. Letcher, of Virginia, elected almost within a year; who, within ten years, was an avowed emancipationist?' Where would stand Charles J. Faulkner, of Virginia, present Minister to France, than whom no man has received more States Rights eulogy; whose Free-Soil abolition doctrines expressed within twenty years, would, if now avowed, drive him in contumely from the State of Virginia? Where would stand John A. Dix, held up twelve years ago by the leading Democratic press of the South as worthy of the Presidency; since that, the Free-Soil candidate for Governor of New York, on the Van Buren abolition ticket, and subsequently to that a petted recipient of Democratic favor, and now a prominent office-holder under Mr. Buchanan? Mr. Dix was offered some time since, we believe, the Ministership to England, and Mr. Faulkner is now Minister to France; and both Free-Soilers and emancipationists, since Mr. Everett was one, if ever; and the strictures, now quoted against the latter, are those that grew out of his appointment to a foreign embassy in 1841!

"How of Mr. Buchanan; who, in 1826, considered slavery 'a great moral and political evil;' who, in 1836, presented and voted to receive petitions for the abolition of slavery; who, in 1844, considered the subject of slavery the great obstacle to agreeing to support the acquisition of Texas; who avowed his repugnance at that time to extend the limits and the privileges of the Union over any new slaveholding territory?

"How of Benj. R. Hallett, of Mass., for whose rejection in the Baltimore Convention the sectional Southern Democrats made a month since their second bolt? Mr. Hallett, in 1849, ten years after Mr. Everett's alleged offence, introduced resolutions into the Massachusetts Legislature, of which the following are copies:

"*Resolved*, That we are opposed to slavery in any form and color, and in favor of freedom and FREESOIL, wherever man lives throughout God's heritage.

"*Resolved*, That we are opposed to the extension of slavery to free Territories and in favor of the exercise of all Constitutional and necessary means to restrict it to the limits within which it does or may exist by the local laws of the State.

"This test of Democratic converts (tried by the Southern Democratic standard) might be multiplied. It was only on Sunday morning last that we showed from the record that in 1836, Mr. Cushing, the President of the Convention that nominated the Breckinridge ticket, opposed the admission of our sister State of Arkansas into the Union, because her Constitution tolerated slavery. How does he stand to-day? At the head of the Southern party. Has he changed since 1836? But you cannot assume that, so long as you deny to Everett the benefit of a modification of his views, and Mr. Cushing stands to-day, according to the rule by which Democrats judge Mr. Everett, an abolitionist. There is no escape from this conclusion."

#### HON. J. M. BERRIEN AND HON. EDWARD EVERETT.

In 1842, when the charge of unsoundness on the slavery question was made against Mr. Everett, Senator Berrien being called on to defend his vote for him as minister to England, vindicated triumphantly both himself and Mr. Everett. In his address to the people of Georgia, on that occasion, he said of Mr. Everett:

"He was an early, I believe the earliest, and certainly one of the most decided advocates, on the floor of Congress, of the south, of their exclusive right to determine the question for themselves, when to the astonishment of the more timid or more prudent of his eastern brethren, he declared his readiness to shoulder his musket in defence of them."

## BRECKINRIDGE AND EVERETT.

In his speech before the Kentucky Legislature, on the 21st of December last, Mr. Breckinridge paid a noble tribute to Mr. Everett. He said:

"There is another element at the North, not large, but NOBLE AND TRUE. It consists of the scattered cohorts of the *old Whig party*, of men like EVERETT, Choate, and their associates, whose CONSERVATISM, CULTURE, and PATRIOTISM REBELLED AGAINST THE REPUBLICAN ALLIANCE. Besides these, there are many thousands in the northern States *who seldom attend the poles*, and whose voices have not been heard amidst the clamors that surround them. To all these let us appeal; let us solemnly demand a general revolt of the virtue and loyalty of the country against the pernicious principles that threaten its safety, and when all the forces are arrayed in their proper ranks, we shall be able to see what remains to hope or fear."

*From the Montgomery Post, July 31.*

## LETTER FROM JOHN BELL.

NASHVILLE, July 22, 1860.

DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 9th instant was received ten days since, and it is due to you, as well as myself, to state the causes which have delayed my answer to this late day to explain what, otherwise, might be imputed to me as discourtesy. Such a statement is due to numerous other gentlemen, who, in the last month or six weeks, have addressed letters of inquiry to me, from different quarters of the country, as to my views and opinions on the more prominent questions at issue in the pending canvass, and which have received no answer.

To the inquiries in all such letters there was but one reply, as I conceived, which could, consistently and properly, be made, under the circumstances of my position, which was, to refer the writers to my past course; to the views and opinions I have heretofore held and expressed on the subjects or questions embraced in their letters. But it appeared to me that a reply, containing nothing more than such a general reference, without pointing out the particular votes, speeches, and other evidences of what I had said or done in connection with the questions made the subject of inquiry, or stating where they were found, would be ungracious, to say the least of it. To make such references in my answers would far exceed the ordinary limits of a letter, and I concluded that it would be more convenient and satisfactory to both parties, to accompany my answers with a printed collection of such of my speeches and letters as have a direct bearing upon the subjects of controversy, or of such copious extracts therefrom, as to leave nothing to be supplied by further quotations from them. The preparation of such a compilation was immediately commenced, by a member of the Central Union Committee of Tennessee; it is now completed, and I transmit, herewith, a copy of it, printed in the "National Union." It was issued from the press a week later than was anticipated by me, and hence, my answer to your letter, as well as to others, has been delayed a week beyond the time I had proposed to myself to answer them.

For the reasons which impel me to decline any further answer to the inquiries in your letter, I refer you to the first and second pages of the "National Union." You will observe that the ground there taken is, that it would be inconsistent with the declared views of the Convention which placed me in the position I now occupy before the public, to make any new declaration of principles. But I do not choose to shelter myself under the authority of the nominating convention against any reproach I may incur in consequence of the course I have thought it my duty to pursue in relation to this subject. Had I been a member of the convention I would have resisted the adoption of any platform, or other declaration of principles, not embraced or implied in the three fundamental propositions or objects intended to be maintained and secured by the National Union Party, and which constitute the basis of its organization—"The Constitution, the Union, and the Enforcement of the Laws." The great aim of the National Union Party is, to restore peace, with justice to both sections of the Union—not to perpetuate strife.

Whatever may be the policy or designs of others, North and South, who, in their letters, have insisted upon their right, as a matter of principle, to call upon me to declare my views and opinions upon any or all of the questions which have become the subject of controversy in the present canvass, and contend that I cannot refuse compliance with their demands, without a violation of the obligation they assume to exist, on my part, as a candidate for public place, I have no distrust of your sincerity and good faith in



making the earnest appeals to me, which you do in your letter, to take a course, which I hope you will, upon reflection, perceive would not be in conformity with the intentions and expectations of those who chose me to be their leader, and the representative of their policy and principles; nor do I doubt your sincere desire to support the Union ticket, if you can do so consistently with your sense of public duty. It is, therefore, with deep regret, that I find myself constrained to differ with you in any of your views, and most of all to have to say to you, that I cannot go beyond the record of my political life in responding to the questions presented in your letter.

If in the authentic exposition of my course upon the subject of slavery, running through a period of twenty-five years, you can find nothing to inspire you with confidence that, in the event of my election, I would so employ the power and influence of the Executive Department of the Government, as to give no just ground of complaint to the South, or any other section of the Union, while I would regret the loss of your support and that of your friends, I could not reasonably expect to receive it.

You are at liberty to make any use of this letter you may think proper.

I am, with great respect and the most friendly regard,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN BELL.

Col. THOMAS H. WATTS.

### PLEDGE AGAINST SLAVERY AGITATION.

After the passage of the Compromise Acts of 1850, the following declaration and pledge were drawn up by Mr. Clay, and first signed by him and then by some forty other leading members of the 31st Congress. They vindicate at once the great importance in which Mr. Clay held the Compromise then just passed, and also the immense divergence of what is now called the Republican party from the views then held. The following is the declaration:

"The undersigned, members of the Thirty-first Congress of the United States, believing that a renewal of sectional controversy upon the subject of slavery would be both dangerous to the Union and destructive of its objects, and seeing no mode by which such controversy can be avoided, except by a strict adherence to the settlement thereof effected by the compromise acts passed at the last session of Congress, do hereby declare their intention to maintain the said settlement inviolate, and to resist all attempts to repeal or alter the acts aforesaid, unless by the general consent of the friends of the measure, and to remedy such evils, if any, as time and experience may develop.

"And for the purpose of making this resolution effective, they further declare that they will not support for office of President or Vice President, or of Senator or of Representative in Congress, or as a member of a State Legislature, any man of whatever party, who is not known to be opposed to the disturbance of the settlement aforesaid, and to the renewal, in any form, of agitation upon the subject of slavery.

Henry Clay,  
Howell Cobb,  
C. S. Morehead,  
William Duer,  
Robert L. Rose,  
H. S. Foote,  
Wm. C. Dawson,  
James Brooks,  
Thomas J. Rusk,  
A. H. Stephens,  
Jeremiah Clemens,  
Robert Toombs,  
James Cooper,  
M. P. Gentry,  
Thomas G. Pratt,

Henry W. Hilliard,  
Wm. M. Gwin,  
F. E. McLean,  
Samuel Elliott,  
A. G. Watkins,  
David Outlaw,  
Alexander Evans,  
H. A. Bullard,  
C. H. Williams,  
T. S. Haymond,  
J. P. Phoenix,  
A. H. Sheppard,  
A. M. Schermerhorn,  
David Breck,  
John R. Thurman.

James L. Johnson,  
D. A. Bokee,  
J. B. Thompson,  
Geo. R. Andrews,  
J. M. Anderson,  
W. P. Mangum,  
John B. Kerr,  
Jeremiah Morton,  
J. P. Caldwell,  
R. I. Bowie,  
Edmund Deberry,  
E. C. Cabell,  
Humphrey Marshall,  
Allen F. Owen,

President PIERCE pledged himself in his Inaugural, and again in his first Message, that by no act of his should the happy condition of the country under the Compromise be disturbed; yet in 1854 the country *was* again thrown into agitation on this very subject, and the Republican party thereby built up and increased. And it is now a lamentable fact, that some of the signers of the pledge are amongst the most ultra of the agitators.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
CONSTITUTIONAL UNION PARTY.

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Hon. ALEXANDER R. BOTELEK, of Virginia, *Chairman*.

- " JNO. A. ROCKWELL, of Connecticut.
- " WILLIAM TEMPLE, of Delaware.
- " J. MORRISON HARRIS, of Maryland.
- " JOSHUA HILL, of Georgia.
- " RICHARD W. THOMPSON, of Indiana.
- " M. Y. JOHNSON, of Illinois.
- " ROBERT MALLORY, of Kentucky.
- " MARSHALL P. WILDER, of Massachusetts.
- " ANTHONY KENNEDY, of Maryland.
- " D. B. ST. JOHN, of New York.
- " JAMES BISHOP, of New Jersey.
- " JOHN A. GILMER, of North Carolina.
- " HENRY M. FULLER, of Pennsylvania.
- " THOMAS A. R. NELSON, of Tennessee.

*For the District of Columbia.*

Hon. JOSEPH BRYAN, of Alabama.

BENJ. OGLE TAYLOR, Esq., Washington City.

R. H. WILLIAMSON, Esq.,                   "

W. G. FREEMAN, Esq.,                   "

JOS. H. BRADLEY, Esq.,                   "

L. A. WHITELEY, Esq., of Maryland, *Secretary*.

Headquarters of the Committee, 357 D street, between 9th and 10th streets, Washington, D. C.

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HEADQUARTERS NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONSTITUTIONAL UNION PARTY,

WASHINGTON, July 10, 1860.

At a meeting of the National Executive Committee of the Constitutional Union party, held at their headquarters, in the city of Washington, this 10th of July, 1860, the following resolution was unanimously adopted, to wit:

*Resolved*, That, as a weekly campaign paper, *The Union Guard* has been started in this city, at the solicitation of the National Executive Committee of the Constitutional Union party, to be conducted by men of experience, ability, and discretion, who are zealous in their devotion to the cause of the Union party, and sincere in their desire to promote the election of Bell and Everett, meets the entire approval of this committee, and we heartily commend it to the friends of our cause and our candidates as a reliable campaign paper and central organ of the party, and a staunch and unwavering defender and advocate of the Union, the Constitution, and the enforcement of the laws, and of the Union party nominees. We would, therefore, respectfully urge our friends in all the States to use their active efforts, without delay, to extend the circulation of the "*Union Guard*," if possible, into every county, and township, and precinct in every State of the Confederacy.

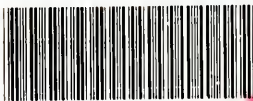
By order of the Committee:

L. A. WHITELEY, *Secretary*.

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